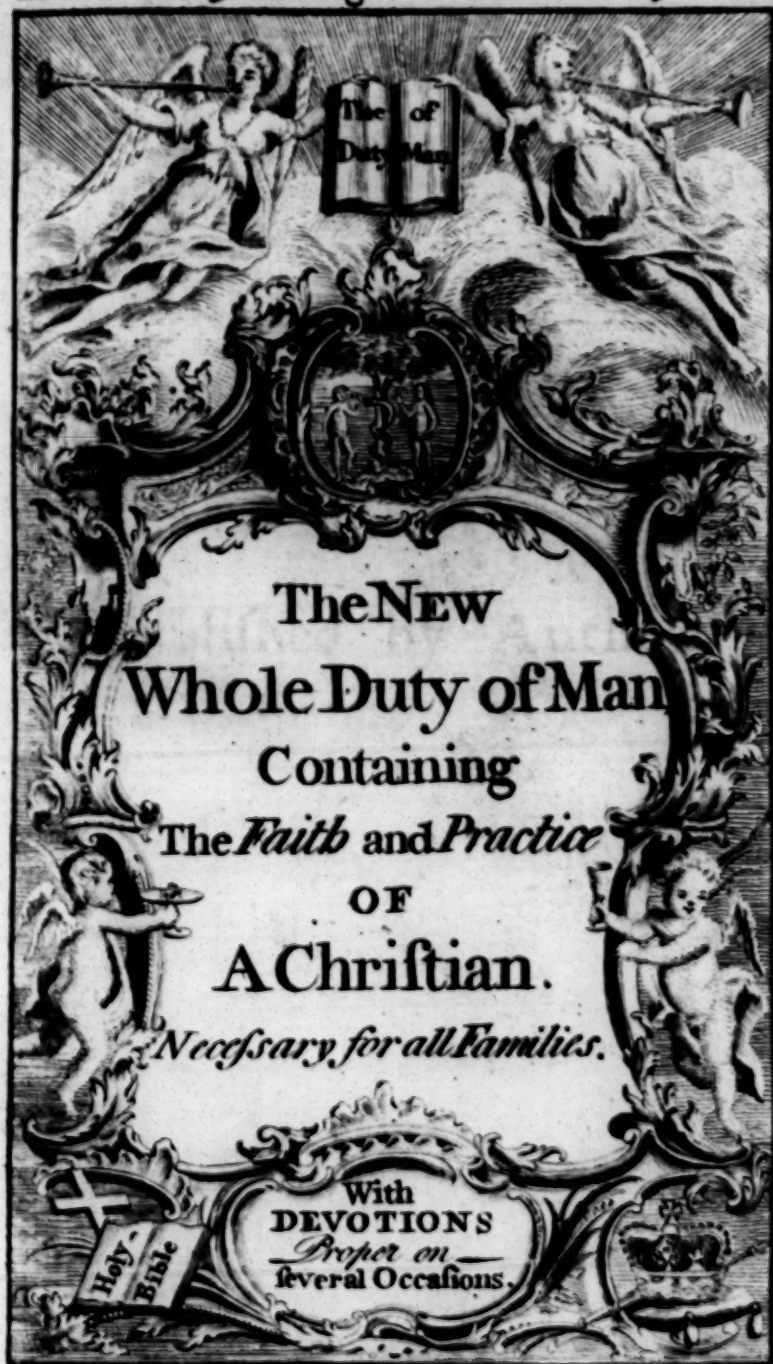


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Published by Authority.

Ye are not under the LAW but under GRACE.

Rom: 6.16.



The Law was given by Moses but Grace & Truth came by Jesus Christ That whosoever believeth in him should not Perish but have eternal Life John 1.17. and 3.16.

J. Wheatley Sculp.



X

The NEW
Whole Duty of Man:

CONTAINING
The FAITH as well as PRACTICE
OF

A CHRISTIAN;

MADE EASY
For the *Practice* of the *Present* Age,

As the OLD *Whole Duty of Man* was designed for
those *unhappy* Times in which it was written;

AND
Supplying the ARTICLES of the
CHRISTIAN FAITH,

Which are wanting in that Book, though Essentially
Necessary to Salvation.

Necessary for All Families,

AND
Authorised by the KING's most Excellent MAJESTY.

With Devotions proper for several Occasions.

The SIXTEENTH EDITION, with ADDITIONS.

Without FAITH it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6.

*This is his Commandment, that we should BELIEVE on the Name of his
Son Jesus Christ, and LOVE one another. I John iii. 23.*

D U B L I N :

Printed for W. WILSON, and J. WILLIAMS.
MDCC LXXIV.

Extract of a LETTER from Mrs. *Teresa*
Constantia Phillips, to the Right Hon. the
EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

IF my girl lives till she is twenty, I shall recommend to her perusal that celebrated performance of your Lordship's, *The whole Duty of Man*; but at present the morality it teaches, I think, is matter for older heads than her's. Indeed, having the honour to be pretty well acquainted with your Lordship, I am surprised when I read it; and unless I had it from your own mouth, that you were the Author of that pious book, could never have believed your lucubrations could have turned upon a system of religion and self-denial, so full of austerity and mortification. Your Lordship will, I hope, pardon my mentioning your being the *Author of that inestimable Piece*, as you enjoined me to no sort of secrecy; but I don't know where to produce an instance, that doth so much honour to my own opinion, *that there is nothing we are so often mistaken in as appearances*. When one sees your Lordship with a half-down cast look, twirling your thumbs, I must confess myself one of those hereticks, who heretofore suspected your stifled thoughts were much more governed by the flesh than the spirit. Methinks I now see your Lordship, in the very position I have this moment described, turning your thumbs one over the other; and that you are as much surprised at a sheet of moral reasoning from me, as I can be when I turn over the **WHOLE DUTY OF MAN**, and recollect **LORD CHESTERFIELD** to be the author.



To the R E A D E R.

THE following reasons, I hope, will justify me to a candid and considerate reader, for publishing this *Whole Duty of Man*; and, I trust, they are also sufficient, to remove and prevent any prejudices, which at first appearance may possibly be entertained or suggested against it.

It being now near one hundred years, since the publication of the *OLD Whole Duty of Man*; it need not be matter of surprise to any, if the generality of readers begin to be but little affected by that work.

The cause of which dislike, I presume, is to be ascribed in a great measure, to the distance of those times, in which that treatise was written: for, not only the words, but the manner of expression, and the ways and methods of treating such subjects are, and ought to be, very different now, from what they were formerly: and though I am far from denying, that a vein of sound learning and morality is visible throughout that book, or that it was well adapted for those unhappy times of strife and confusion, in which it was written; * yet, all this lying under the forementioned disadvantages, it is apprehended, the people of the present age are never like to be better reconciled to it. "The case in reality was this: During the times of confusion, many of the preachers (and writers) had not only forborne to inculcate the duties of Morality, but had laboured to depreciate them; to persuade the people, that *Faith* was all, and

* The *OLD Whole Duty of Man* (as appears by Dr. Hammond's Letter, dated March 1657) was first published under the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, who had subverted the constitution both in church and state.

Works nothing : therefore, to take off those unhappy impressions, the Clergy found themselves obliged to inculcate, with more than ordinary diligence, the necessity of Moral Duties in the christian life, and to labour to restore them to their proper share in the christian scheme."

* Besides,

It is very evident, I think, that the subjects treated of in the *OLD Whole Duty of Man* are by no means so many, nor all of them so well chosen, as they might have been, for the use and necessities of the present age : and, I believe, no considerate man can doubt, that our CHURCH and RELIGION have another sort of enemies†, † Atheists, to contend with now, than the *Solifidians* of Deists, &c. that time ; men, whose shocking impieties and tenets strike at the very foundation of Christianity itself : for which reason the *OLD Whole Duty of Man* (which, in opposition to the prevailing doctrine of those days, is chiefly confined to the moral duties) cannot by any means be well suited to the impious age we live in, when the articles of our Christian Faith are so impudently attacked and contemned : and, whether the *OLD Whole Duty of Man*, which (for near a century last past) has been indiscriminately put into the hands, not only of the common people, but of many others, as a complete summary of our most holy religion, when at the same time the Articles of the Christian Faith are quite omitted in it ; I say, whether this hath not in some degree contributed, during such a course of years, to produce that contempt which the Christian Faith now labours under, is submitted to the considerate and judicious part of mankind to determine.

Most certain it is, that a man may be so struck with the beauty and excellency of MORAL Duties, as to be less concerned than he ought to be, for a sound FAITH ; and may make shipwreck of the one, whilst he is too hastily and zealously pursuing the other. It is also certain, that the
author

* See the Bishop of London's 2d pastoral letter, page 64 8vo Edition.

author of the *OLD Whole Duty of Man* himself, conscious (it may be) of the defects of that treatise, speaking in his *Lively Oracles* of those things we are to believe, says;
 ‘ These are the excellencies of the doctrinal part of Scripture, which also render them most aptly preparative for the *preceptive*: and, indeed, so they were designed;
 ‘ the *Credenda* and the *Agenda* being such inseparable relations, that whoever parts them, forfeits the advantage of both:’ and, as the *Duty of Man* was the first, and the *Lively Oracles* the last piece of that author; for so they are placed in his works; it may reasonably be presumed, the *Lively Oracles* was intended to supply the defects of the said *OLD Whole Duty of Man*: but, the proprietors of those books not thinking fit to print them together, the author’s intention (if such it were) has been rendered of little effect.

But, how fashionable soever it may be at this time of day, those men grossly impose upon themselves, who confine their religion within the moral scheme of the *OLD Whole Duty of Man*, and so rest their acceptance with God upon the mere performance of the obligations of Morality, and slight and ridicule the Christian Religion: I say, how foolishly such men deceive their own souls, is described with such clearness and energy by the late *archbishop SHARP*, that I shall give it the reader in his own words.

‘ It is not enough (*says this judicious and orthodox divine*) to entitle any man to everlasting salvation, that he practise the duties of Natural Religion; unless he also believe and embrace that religion, which God has revealed by JESUS CHRIST; supposing, he have opportunities of coming to the knowledge of it. Bare Morality or honesty of life, without a right FAITH, will not save a man’s soul; supposing, the man have opportunities, of coming to the knowledge of that right FAITH. This consideration I seriously address to all those among us, who think it so indifferent a matter, of *what Religion* or *what Faith* they be, provided they be but honest in their lives: They think, nothing
 ‘ offends

‘ offends God, but the open violation of those rules of
 ‘ Morality, which all the world must acknowledge them-
 ‘ selves obliged to observe, and which it is scandalous
 ‘ not to observe : But this is a grievous mistake, and of
 ‘ most pernicious consequence. It is certain ; that,
 ‘ wherever God has revealed his will, and declared upon
 ‘ what terms he will bestow salvation upon mankind ;
 ‘ there all men are, under pain of damnation, obliged
 ‘ to embrace his Revelation, and to believe and profess,
 ‘ and practise, according to the doctrines of such Reve-
 ‘ lation. It is certain likewise, that God hath fully and
 ‘ entirely revealed his will by JESUS CHRIST and his A-
 ‘ postles in the *New Testament* ; and hath so revealed it,
 ‘ as to exclude all men from the hopes of salvation, who,
 ‘ having opportunity of knowing JESUS CHRIST and
 ‘ his doctrines, do not believe in him. For any man,
 ‘ therefore, to reject this method of God ; and to say,
 ‘ “ I hope to be saved by another way, than God hath
 ‘ “ appointed,” is the greatest folly in the world : let every
 ‘ one among us, therefore, as they would not be undone
 ‘ to all eternity, endeavour to instruct themselves aright
 ‘ in the true Religion. All their pretended moral Ho-
 ‘ nesty will not in the least excuse them before God,
 ‘ if, having means to find the truth, they do not embrace
 ‘ it, but continue infidels or misbelievers. If they had
 ‘ been born and bred in an heathen country, where
 ‘ they had no opportunity of coming to the knowledge
 ‘ of God’s revealed Will, I know not, how far their
 ‘ justice and temperance, and other good moral qualities,
 ‘ might avail them towards the procuring God’s accept-
 ‘ ance : but, to live in a Christian Country, nay, and to
 ‘ be baptised into Christ’s Religion, and yet be Pagans
 ‘ as to their notions and opinions ; not to *believe* in JE-
 ‘ SUS CHRIST, but to think to please God in the way
 ‘ of the Philosophers ; there is nothing in the world to
 ‘ be said, in their excuse for this. They will at last find
 ‘ true, what our Saviour hath pronounced ; that this is
 ‘ their condemnation (and a heavy one it will be) that
 ‘ *Light is come into the world ; but they have loved darkness*
 ‘ *rather than light, because their deeds are evil : For every*
 ‘ *one,*

‘one, that doth evil, hateth light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.’ *

I have endeavoured, therefore, to supply the foregoing defects of the *OLD Whole Duty of Man*; even such defects, as the said *archbishop*, as well as the above cited author himself of the *Lively Oracles*, affirm to be so fatal to every man’s eternal salvation; by furnishing the age we live in, with a *Duty of Man*, much better suited (I hope) to the Christian Religion, and the occasions of the present times.

It may not (however) be improper, to take notice here of two sorts of men, who are not likely to relish the following pages; *viz* such, as would gladly bring all religion into contempt; and such, as think nothing should interfere with public Preaching from the pulpit. As to the former; no body can be ignorant, that the age we now live in has produced many men, who make light of the Christian Religion, and talk contemptuously of our Saviour and his doctrines: but, are we thence to conclude, there is no reason, no argument, no evidence to be offered for Christianity, to enforce its Faith and Practice; because these men who are acknowledged to have wit and parts, make it their business to run it down? No: this would be a very false and unjust conclusion; and, if ye can imagine otherwise, ye are strangely mistaken in your men. They never applied their heads much, to examine these things: they have, perhaps, gotten some common-place heads, with which they think they can disparage Christianity; and, it is likely, they have wit enough, to set off those things to advantage. But, as for serious thinking, and putting things together, and making a solemn judgment of what is true or false in those matters; as in the presence of God, and as in a business, whereon their everlasting salvation or damnation depends: I say, as for this, ye may assure yourselves, these men never did it, nor are they capable of doing it: it is not in their nature, to give themselves so much trouble, as
such

* John iii. 19, 20.

such a work will require ; and therefore we may be sure their infidelity does not proceed from any want of evidence, or arguments, of the truth of the Christian Religion.

In a word ; all our natural and civil duties are, by virtue of our profession of Christianity, strongly tied upon us ; and it is very much to the honour of our religion, that it is wholly taken up in providing for the security and benefit of mankind, even in this life : Its general bent and tendency is, to set men at ease and make them happy, by securing to all, the duties due from each other, and from the want of which proceeds all the mischief in the world ; it does not leave men to be moved by such considerations alone as natural Reason can suggest, but furnishes them with better. Now certainly, nothing can be more to the advantage of a man, than that all, with whom he has to do, should be commanded by God to shew him mercy, and to do him justice and all good offices, and to suffer none to do him injury : Nothing (I say) is more likely to secure a man's peace and happiness, than such a fence as this ; and this is the fence Christianity provides for every single person in the world. In fine, there never has been any religion framed to make men happy, even in this life, like that of *Jesus Christ*, if it were thoroughly pursued : for, a man cannot possibly be made uneasy or miserable, or suffer any evil at another's hands, without the violation of some christian command ; which, if obeyed, would have secured him from it. So that, what reasons these men really have for slighting and ridiculing the Christian Religion and the ministers thereof, let the world judge. We cannot enter into the hearts of men, to see upon what motives they act, and under what influences they reason : but, when we consider the strength and clearness of the evidences of Christianity, with the advantages and excellencies of the gospel institution, and the strict restraint it lays upon excess and uncleanness of all kinds ; we cannot but see, that it requires the greatest degree of charity, to ascribe their infidelity to any thing but the love of vice, or the love of contradiction.

Then ;

Then ; as to those, who are so tenacious of Preaching, as to oppose all written discourses ; I desire it may be observed, that, though Preaching be usually allowed the pre-eminence of written discourses ; yet, if men would hear or read them with due attention, they might be effectual to the same ends and purposes. For, notwithstanding what may be urged in favour of the voice, the air and the action of a preacher ; still, what is uttered with the voice passes off so fast, that men of ordinary capacities are not able to judge of the soundness of it : and the exhortations to virtue often have but little effect ; because the rules and directions, which we hear concerning it, are so very apt to slip out of our memories ; whereas written Discourses are always with us ; and we may have recourse to them, whenever we please, to recover what we have forgotten, to examine and satisfy ourselves in any thing we doubt of, and by leisurely searches and enquiries to attain the knowledge of those sublime truths, which would otherwise be too hard for us.

I cannot therefore but infer, that it is a great though common mistake with some readers, to think, that written Discourses cannot have their due praise, but there must be a design of degrading and undervaluing Preaching : but I trust, I cannot be suspected of so invidious an insinuation, when I declare, the following discourses are by no means intended to hinder any man's attendance on divine service ; but are accommodated to the occasions of such, as cannot be always present at the public worship ; and to the use of families and private persons, who religiously keep the sabbath, and endeavour to spend their leisure hours in the improvement of their Christian knowledge : and those, who shall think fit to make use of them for such purposes, I hope, by God's blessing, will greatly benefit at least their children and servants ; and I trust, they may be so far useful to themselves, as to bring to their remembrance the most necessary directions for their Christian conduct in this life.

To

To conclude; I am but little concerned for those censures, the men I have been speaking of may pass upon this performance; because the design of it, with well-disposed minds, will excuse for many imperfections: and, if I can but (in any degree) promote a sense of religion, or a due respect for its Ministers, where they are wanting; or contribute to the improvement of them, where they are already entertained; I shall be much better pleased, than to be an author, of some account in the opinion of the greatest critic.

THE



T H E
P R E F A C E,
E N F O R C I N G

The Necessity of Caring for the SOUL.

- I. *Man is composed of an immortal Soul, and, II. Of a mortal body. III. Of the future state of the soul, and how it is determined. IV. Persuasives to the Care of the Soul, from the nature of the first and second COVENANTS; shewing, V. That it is in every man's power, to take that Care of his Soul, which the gospel requires.*

THE intention of the ensuing Treatise, being to instruct all ranks and conditions of men, and to descend to the understandings of the very weakest capacities; in a short and plain explication of those DUTIES, which every one must believe and practise in this world, if they hope to be happy for ever in the world to come; I shall introduce the whole, by endeavouring to draw them to the consideration and Care of their own Souls: which, being their first and general duty, ought to be preparatory to all the rest; because, whoso is not firmly persuaded of the necessity of this, will never give attention to the doctrines and exhortations of the other duties. *What must I do to be saved?* is an enquiry, which deserves our utmost diligence and attention: for, if we be ignorant of the will of God; or, knowing it, will not follow or be led by that unerring light, but suffer ourselves to be hurried away by our unruly passions in the pursuit of the things of this life; we are wretched and miserable, blind and naked, notwithstanding all our attainments; and we shall one day be convinced, to our sorrow, that there is no folly like that of preferring things temporal to things eternal.

Man consists of Soul and Body: a Soul, which never dieth; and which according to the care we take of it, in this life, is designed to return unto God, who made it; *Man consists of a soul and body.*

2 *The PREFACE, of the Necessity* *

when the body shall return unto the earth from whence it was taken. He, therefore, who is truly wise, will consider, that he has a Soul, as well as a body, to take care of; a spiritual and immortal substance, which can never die; but, when loosed from that prison, in which it is now confined, must live for ever either in happiness or misery.

We may rightly conclude, that the Soul of man is an immaterial principle distinct * from the body; and is the cause of those several operations, of which by inward sense and experience we are conscious to ourselves.

It is that, whereby we think and remember, whereby we reason and debate about any thing, and freely chuse and refuse such things as are presented to us: it is so created by the divine wisdom and goodness, as not to have in itself any principle of corruption; but will naturally

* We learn from scripture (*Eccles. iii. 21.*) that a beast has a spirit distinct from it's body, and that the said spirit is separated from it by death; and, that they are not to be considered, as mere machines and engines without real sensation, is as evident to us, as that men have sensations; for the brute beasts appear to have all the five senses, as truly as any man whatever. Nevertheless it will not follow, that their souls are immortal, in the sense we attribute immortality to the souls of men, because they are not capable of the exercise of reason and religion; whereas the immortality of men's souls consists not only in a capacity of living in a state, separate from the body; but of living so, as to be sensible of happiness or misery, in that state of separation; because they are not only endued with a faculty of sense, but with other faculties, which do not depend upon, or have any connection with matter. Therefore, although it should be allowed, that the souls of brutes remain, when separated from their bodies; yet, being only endowed with a sensitive principle, the operations thereof depend upon an organical disposition of the body; which being once dissolved, they probably lapse into an insensible and inactive state; and being no further necessary, may return to their primitive nothing.

turally of itself continue for ever ; and cannot, by any natural decay or power of nature, be dissolved or destroyed : for, when the body falls into the ground, the Soul will still remain and live separate from it ; and continue to perform all such operations, towards which the organs of the body are not necessary ; and not only continue, but live in this separate state, so as to be sensible of happiness or misery.

These truths have great probability from the evidence of Reason ; and natural arguments incline us to believe them. Now the arguments from Reason are taken from the nature of the Soul itself : for those several actions and operations, of which we are all conscious to ourselves ; such as liberty or a power of chusing or refusing, and the several acts of reason and understanding ; cannot, without great violence, be ascribed to matter, or be resolved into any bodily principle : we must therefore attribute them to another principle, different from matter ; and consequently the Soul is immortal, and incapable of corruption, in its own nature. Besides, when all men, though distant and remote from one another, and different in their tempers and manners, and ways of education ; when the most barbarous nations, as well as the most polite, agree in a thing ; we may well call it the voice of nature, or a natural notion or dictate of our minds : But it is evident, from the testimony of many ancient heathen writers, and the consent of several credible histories ; that they believed, that men and women do live after death, and have an existence when separated from their bodies ; and consequently that the soul is immortal. It is true, some few instances may be brought of some, who have denied this ; but their opposition is no proof, that this notion is not natural : for some few exceptions are no better arguments against an universal consent, than some few monsters and prodigies are against the regular course of nature ; because men may offer violence to nature, and debauch their understandings by lust, interest or pride, and an affectation of singularity.

*It's Immortality
proved by
reason.*

The sense of nature is very evident, from the great number of wicked men in the world ; who (notwith-

standing it be their interest, that there should be no life after this) cannot overcome the fears of those torments, in which the wicked are threatened to be punished for ever. This truth is confirmed, by those natural notions we have of God, and of the real difference between Good and Evil; for the belief of a God implies the belief of his infinite Goodness and Justice. The former, his Goodness inclines him to make some creatures more perfect than others, and capable of greater degrees of happiness, and of longer duration: because goodness delights in communicating its own perfections: and since in man are found the perfections of an immortal nature, which are knowledge and liberty; we may infer, that he is endowed with such a principle, as in its own nature is capable of eternal life. The latter, his infinite Justice, proves, that he loves righteousness, and hates iniquity: but, the dispensations of his providence in this world being very promiscuous, (so that good men often suffer, and that for the sake of righteousness; and wicked men frequently prosper, and that by means of their wickedness) it is reasonable, to believe the suitable distribution of rewards and punishments in a future state; because, as there is a difference between Good and Evil, founded in the nature of things; it is reasonable to imagine, they will be distinguished by rewards and punishments; not in this world but in a future state; where all things shall be set right, and the justice of God's providence vindicated; which is the very thing meant by the immortality of the Soul.

Lastly, The natural Hopes and Fears of men cannot well be accounted for, without the belief of the Soul's immortality. What would it avail, to be desirous of perpetuating a name to posterity, and by brave actions endeavour to purchase fame; if there were not a belief of an existence in another world, to enjoy it? Can it be thought, that they, who by the virtue and piety of their lives, by the justice and honesty of their actions, have endeavoured to seek the Lord, have not been raised to an expectation of rewards after death? Again, how can any one account, for that shame and horror, which follow the commission of any wicked action; though covered with the greatest privacy,
and

and unknown to any but the offender? Certainly it can be only the effect of nature, which suggests to them the certainty of an after-reckoning; when they shall be punished for their bad actions, or rewarded for their good; and so fills the one with hopes, and the other with fear and dread.*

These are such arguments as, in reason, the nature of the thing will bear: for, an immortal nature is neither capable of the evidence of sense, nor of mathematical demonstration; and therefore we shall content ourselves with these arguments in this matter, so far as to suffer ourselves to be persuaded, that it is highly probable.

But that, which giveth us the greatest assurance of it, is the revelation of the Gospel, where-
by life and immortality are brought to light; and which is the only sure foundation of our

*By Scrip-
ture.*

hopes, and an anchor for our faith; because the authority of God is above all reason and human knowledge. The resurrection of Christ is not only a manifest proof of his divine authority, and that he was a prophet sent from God; but also, that we shall rise again, to be reunited with our souls: it should therefore make us prefer the interest of our Souls, before all the advantages of this life: nay, it should make us ready and willing to part with every thing that is most dear to us in this world, to secure their eternal welfare; because, if we lose our own souls, all the enjoyments of this world can make us no recompence. Though the fall of our first parents have made us all subject to death; yet our Souls, when separated from our bodies, shall live in another state: and even our Bodies, though committed to the grave and turned to dust, shall at the last day rise again, and be reunited to our Souls; and being so united, the whole man, Body and Soul, shall be made capable of eternal happiness or misery.

II. Since this is the case with all of us, how inconsiderately do men act, in spending so much thought about the Body; which is the seat of pains and the most noisome diseases,

*Of the
Body.*

A 3

whilst

* See the reasonableness of a last judgment in Sunday 4. Sect. vii.

6 *The PREFACE, of the Necessity*

whilst it is alive ; and which death (which it cannot escape) renders so intolerably offensive and odious, that it must be buried out of our sight ! To spend all our time and care, about this vile part, the Body ; and to neglect the most valuable part, the Soul, which is of inestimable worth on account of its noble faculties, and as it is made after God's own image, and is to exist to all eternity : This certainly argues the greatest degree of imprudence and stupidity ; and therefore our greatest kindness for our Body is to take care of our Soul. Consider, whether we be able to live in the midst of everlasting fire ! If the burn of a finger be so painful, or a small spark of fire so intolerable to the least part of the Body ; Who can endure the fire, which can never be quenched, and whose torments after thousands and millions of years are no nearer an end, than they were at the first moment they began ? Yet, this is the woful and certain end of every one, who neglects the care of his own Soul. Not that I would be understood to intend, that we must neglect our Bodies : but that, which promotes the interests of our souls, must be preferred before any interests of the body, which cannot live without the soul.

Every present enjoyment, be it ever so comfortable,
Which has may be lost ; and riches, whatever advantage they give us, may make themselves
no certain wings and fly away. How many have been
happiness. reduced in a few hours, from plentiful circumstances to extreme necessity, by fire or water ? Besides, if people imagine themselves secure in an inheritance, a small observation of human life may shew, that this cannot absolutely be depended upon ; for, fraud and violence may turn a man out of his fortune or estate. As to health, the greatest of our outward enjoyments, where is the person, that can depend upon a continued state of it ? The most confirmed constitution is not proof, against the assaults of pain or sickness : for, every member of the body, every bone, joint and sinew, lies open to many disorders ; and the greatest prudence, or, precaution, or skill of the Physician, cannot many times prevent those disorders from coming upon us, much less ascertain health to us. Again, we often see the highest
honour s

honours exchanged, for the lowest abasements and contempt. So the rich man is frequently reduced to poverty, and the healthy man laid upon a bed of languishing: all the pleasures the sinner can receive, from the most careful gratification of his sensual appetites, are but of the very same kind with those, whereof brute beasts are capable as well as he; only with this difference, that their enjoyments are more affecting, and less allayed with bitterness, than his are; besides, his have far more uneasiness and trouble in them, than of delight and satisfaction. The covetous, the proud, the envious, the glutton, the drunkard, the whoremonger, the ambitious, the revengeful, can testify, out of their own sad experience; that when they have summed up the matter, the contentment, which they receive from the gratification of these several passions or appetites, doth no ways countervail the pains and restlessness, the disturbances and disappointments, and the manifold evil consequences (both as to their body and soul, their good name and estate) which they suffer upon the account of them. Whence we may cry out with the preacher; *Vanity of vanities!* All is vanity, which does not tend to the care of the immortal soul; for the body itself, to which alone such gratifications are suited, is ever tending towards the dust; and will soon be stripped of all sensation of worldly things, and entirely lose the relish of those things, which once had been most agreeable to it: and yet no man is exempt from this debt; we must all go down to the silent grave, and can carry none of those things along with us; and all our pleasures and ease, if they should happen to last so long, must then have their end.

*Is always
tending to
corruption.*

III. On the other hand, that; which serves the interest of our souls, is more lasting, and is never taken from us: its state hereafter will be determined, by our behaviour in this life; heaven or hell, happiness or misery, will be our final portion, just as death finds us: as soon as death strikes, we either are in torments, or go to paradise; either become the companions of devils, or the associates of holy angels, so to remain to

*How the
state of the
soul is de-
termined.*

all eternity : wherefore our greatest care should be, to avoid the one, and to obtain the other. We are often

*Motives for
taking care
of the soul.*

determined, in the affairs of this life, by the hope and fear of things to come ; as all our pursuits, and most of our actions, are for the sake of something future and not yet in sight ; that is, either to prevent some evil feared, or to obtain some good desired : for, in the beginning of life, people apply themselves to become masters of some profession or trade or business, in hopes of a livelihood or of serviceableness, when they arrive at riper years ; though they be not sure, they shall ever live to be masters, of what they labour after ; nor certain of success in the most prudent steps they can take, to accomplish the end of their worldly expectations, of which we have far less certainty, than of an immortal state. Shall it then be said, that we shall be less diligent in the care of our souls, whose affairs are not so uncertain ? Though we therein act upon a future prospect ; yet divine promise ascertains us of success, in the way of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wherefore, though the benefit be future, yet we should not abate our zeal in prosecuting it : that does not prevail on men, to slacken their endeavours for their worldly gain ; how unreasonable then must they be, who have the advantage of a better hope in their aims for another life, and yet neglect the means to attain that happy state ? Again, it can be no excuse for a man to say, that he cannot comply with that self-denial, mortification, and other christian duties ; which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and without which the soul languisheth and is sick, and his faith is dead : for he cannot be ignorant of that plain rule of wisdom, to decline a present pleasure for one equal to it of longer continuance ; or to submit to a present inconvenience, to prevent one more lasting ; or to obtain a more lasting good, though there be no difference in the things themselves, but only in their duration. A wise man will never refuse to go through a short course of physic in an ill habit of body, upon a fair prospect of procuring a regular state of health thereby ; nor neglect to give a small sum of money in hand, upon security of enjoying a good inheritance in a few years

years after : and shall he neglect, to take proper care of his soul, to cleanse it from all impurity, and to prepare it for the enjoyment of that blessed state of eternal happiness ; which is promised to all those, who love God and keep his commandments ; especially, as the most lasting things below bear no proportion to eternal happiness ? If we measure them with eternity, they are as nothing ; and a minute compared with our whole lives is no proportion, in comparison of time and eternal duration.

Whatever is temporal, therefore, is incapable of giving full satisfaction, because it may be taken from us. So, when we are upon an enquiry after happiness, we may discern at first, that the Earth says, ' It is not in me ; for, every thing here is perishing, and must soon have

Why eternal happiness is desirable.

' an end.' Thus the continuance of happiness is the most satisfying character of it ; and the eternity of misery, the most bitter ingredient thereof : it is impossible to be perfectly happy, with the prospect of an end before us. This consideration, that we should never be deprived of them would magnify inferior delights ; and light afflictions, with eternity written upon them, could not be borne. What then should we think, of perfect happiness and complete misery ; both of the highest kind, both eternal ; in one of which, mankind must live for ever ? Oh ! then let us apply to ourselves the force and evidence of that question ; ' What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or, what will a man give, in exchange for his soul ? ' Time bears no proportion to eternity : the most exalted pleasures of this life, which at best are but of a short continuance, can never compensate for the loss of that happiness, which God has prepared for them that love him : yet there are too many, who make this sad choice. Not, that any man chuses evil for the sake of evil, or prefers misery before happiness : but as he, who obeys the commandments of God, chuses life ; so he, who transgresses them, chuseth death ; that death, which God has threatened to the sinner ; even death eternal : for the wages of sin is death.

IV. As the condition of the body at the last day must follow that of the soul; it is our greatest interest, to consider the present state of human nature, and the means, by which alone it is possible for us to be made happy.

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sives to the
care of the
soul.*

If we neglect the disorders of the understanding, will, and affections, which are the parts of the soul; the flesh will ruin us, at the very time it pretends to please us; and the devil will gain many opportunities of beguiling us: whilst the understanding is darkened, and shut against good instructions; the will inclines to chuse evil, and the affections are bent after the pleasures of sin. It is true, man was made holy

*From the
nature of
the first
covenant.*

and upright by God; but having fallen from him by voluntary transgression and wilful disobedience, he presently sunk into a corrupt and degenerate, into a miserable and cursed condition, both in respect of this life, and to that life which is to come. The disobedience of our first parents involved their posterity, and entailed a depravity of nature upon their descendants: which depravity, though it be not a sin in us, till our will closes with it and deliberately consents to it; yet it is certainly sinful in itself, and is thence stiled

Original Sin. Our church has therefore rightly decreed, * That '*Original Sin* standeth not in the following of *Adam*; but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil; so that the flesh lusteth always, contrary to the spirit; and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain; yea, in them, that are regenerated: and, although there is no condemnation for them, that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.' Thus by *Original Sin*, man is not only deprived of the image of God, but becomes liable to

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* See the 9th Article of Religion.

his justice; and as such, God cannot take pleasure in him: and that man, who dies before he is restored to his favour, must be separated from him, and be for ever miserable.

As man could not recover, nor raise himself, out of his own ruin; and as no creature was able to do it; the mercy of God pitied our misery, and his wisdom devised this expedient to reconcile his mercy and justice; 'that no man should, on account of Original Sin, be eternally miserable, except through his own fault:' and his goodness resolved, that the Son of God should undertake this work, and satisfy the offended justice of the Almighty, and repair the ruined nature of mankind.' Thus did God enter into a new covenant with man, by way of remedy for what was past and could not be undone: which as may be fully collected from the gospel, was to this purpose; 'That, on condition of man's steadfast Faith, sincere Repentance, and perfect Obedience, he should be restored through Christ to God's favour, and (after death) to that life and happiness, which was promised to our first parents without tasting of death.' Remission of sins, the condition on God's part of the covenant; is always ready to be made good; if we fail not on our part, of having worthily repented and reformed our lives. Our Saviour has made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: he has suffered a cruel and ignominious death, upon the cross, for our sakes, and, by his death and sufferings, has purchased this grace for us, that real repentance and sincere obedience shall be accepted instead of innocence: but, without this repentance and renewed obedience, we shall not be accepted upon any terms. The sacrifice, which he offered upon the cross, although of infinite value, will not avail us; unless, in conformity to his death and resurrection, we die unto sin and rise again unto newness of life: nothing, but a good life will entitle us to the favour and love of God; and, without his favour, we are of all creatures the most miserable. Not, that the condition of the gospel-covenant is a perfect unflinching obedience; but a sincere endeavour to obey all the

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commands of God, to the utmost of our power : which commands in their general and most proper sense, are so far from being impossible to be observed ; that, on the contrary, a man cannot easily transgress them, without an hardened conscience and deliberate choice. Whensoever God requires more of us, than we are naturally able to perform ; he never fails to afford us proportionably great assistance, to enable us to perform what he so requires : and if, through the frailty and infirmity of our nature, notwithstanding our sincere endeavours to the contrary, we be at any time surpris'd into the commission of sin, God accepts real repentance and a renewed obedience, instead of an uninterrupted course of holiness. Hence it is abundantly evident ; that, as the true and only design of the laws of the gospel is, to make us holy and undefiled ; so it is possible for us, to be really holy, according to the true intent and meaning of those laws. Wherefore, as the excellent nature and design of our religion sufficiently recommends it to our Judgment ; so the possibility of obeying it is a most powerful encouragement to us, to set in earnest about the practice of it : But then we must always consider ; that, as God requires nothing more of us, than a sincere obedience, according to the gracious terms of the gospel-covenant ; so he will not accept of any thing less : for, as it is possible for us to be holy and undefiled according to the true intent of the laws of our religion ; so God has made it the indispensable condition of our happiness, that we actually and in reality become such holy persons. By the means I have mentioned, God and man are brought together again ; and man is redeemed from a state of sin and eternal death, to a state of holiness and the inheritance of eternal life.

This was the end, for which the son of God cloathed himself with our flesh ; that as Man, he might suffer what our sins had deserved ; and that as he was the Son of God, he might make a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction to the divine justice, for the sins of the whole world : for the joy of delivering so many millions of souls from misery, he endured the death of the cross, and all the afflictions of his bitter passion ; which was the perfect sacrifice, whereby all
man-

mankind are restored to the favour of God, and put into a state of salvation. God has promised for his Son's sake, to pardon all such as shall repent and forsake their sins, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; to give his holy Spirit to all such, as shall sincerely pray for the same; and after death to make them eternally happy, if during this short state of trial (which is designed to amend our corrupt and disordered nature) they endeavour to observe the rules, which he has revealed in his word, and which are absolutely necessary to make them capable of eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

*Our care
will not be
in vain.*

Seeing a good life is attended with so many advantages, as to make us live happily and die comfortably, and at last entitle us (through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ) to an eternal inheritance in that kingdom,

*An exhortation to a
holy life.*

which he has purchased for us with his most precious blood; and seeing, on the other hand guilt is its own punishment in this world, and everlasting misery will most certainly be the lot and portion of the wicked and impenitent in the next; what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness? How steadfast and unmoveable should this make us, in the ways of God's laws, and in the works of his commandments? With what indignation and abhorrence should we look upon sin, and with what speed should we fly from that dreadful enemy of our souls, who would rob us of our present as well as future happiness? How should the consideration of these things make us take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God? How steadfastly should we resolve, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but to walk as children of light, in the ways of true piety and holiness; and not to delay, for one moment, the care of our immortal souls? Although God be of infinite goodness and mercy, patient and long-suffering towards sinners, unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; yet we must remember, that he is also infinitely just, and will assuredly vindicate the honour of his laws. All sin and wickedness is an abomination in
his

his sight : He is of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity ; and if his wrath be kindled (yea, but a little) what will become of the wicked and ungodly ? Nothing, but a sincere repentance and amendment of life, will be sufficient to secure them from the vengeance ; which he has threatened to pour down, upon all obstinate and rebellious sinners : and true repentance will most undoubtedly avert his anger.

V. To conclude, with the sentiments of a devout and pious divine : The great plea, which men generally make for the wickedness or carelessness of their lives is this ; ‘ That
It is in every man’s power, to take the necessary care of his soul.
 ‘ it really is not in their power, to live up
 ‘ to such a state of holiness and virtue,
 ‘ as the law of God obligeth them to :
 ‘ grace is in them too weak, and their natural corruptions too strong, for their being ever in a capacity, without more assistance from
 ‘ God, to live strict and religious lives : conversion is
 ‘ the work of God, and cannot be wrought by a man’s
 ‘ self ; and therefore, till God shall please to come upon them with an irresistible power of his Holy Spirit,
 ‘ they must be contented to live as they do ; nay, they
 ‘ must unavoidably live so.’ Now, it is readily granted ; that, without God’s grace, no man can do any thing : and we grant likewise, that it is very probable, their circumstance may be such, as to make it morally impossible, without greater strength and more grace than they have, to live on a sudden as they ought to do ; for, bad principles are more powerful, than good ; but yet, in the mean time, we must needs tell them, they are not mere stocks and stones. How much reason soever they have to complain, of the infirmity or degeneracy of their natures ; yet some things they can do, towards the bettering of them : for instance, though they cannot on a sudden conquer the inward bent and inclination of their minds, so as to hate all sin, and to delight in virtue ; yet, they must needs confess, they have a power over their outward actions : they can as well (if they think it reasonable) direct their feet towards a church, as to a house of gaming or drinking or lewdness : their eyes will serve them as well, to look
 upon

upon a bible or a serious discourse about religion, as to read a scurrilous and prophane book : it is as much in their power (if they please) to give ear to the reasonable advice of their sober friends, as to the mad harrangues of the dissolute company they keep. These things, they must needs acknowledge, they can do, if they will ; nay, and they can do more than this ; for (if they please) they may give themselves time to consider and think, of what they read, or what is said to them, or what their own experience or observation of things will suggest to their minds ; and they can further (if they please) to their consideration add their prayers to Almighty God, to direct them, to assist them, to strengthen them : and though it be certain, that all this, without God's especial grace, will not be effectual for their regeneration and conversion ; yet, if they will but do as much as this comes to, we can assure them, that in time they shall have this especial grace, which they now want. In the same proportion, that they use and employ those gifts and powers, which they at present have ; God will encrease and enlarge them. The truth of all this is confirmed to us, by that memorable saying of our Saviour, which we find in his mouth at several times and upon several occasions. ' To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.' Let it then, above all things, be our great and constant endeavour, to make him our friend ; who is the best of beings, the sovereign good and happiness of all his creatures, and the fountain and foundation of all our comforts and enjoyments in this life, and of all our hopes and expectations in that which is to come : let us make religion the great business of our lives ; and, whilst we have time and opportunity, let us prepare ourselves, by a life of virtue and righteousness, for that great account, which we must one day give : let not the pleasures and vanities of this world, which will shortly have an end, make us unmindful of the great and momentous concerns of eternity. There shall in no wise enter, into that holy place, any thing which defileth ; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lye ; but they who are written in the lamb's book of life : these
are

16 *The* PREFACE, *of the Necessity, &c.*

are the good and virtuous ; who have kept themselves from the pollutions of this wicked world, and have led a life of piety and renewed obedience towards God, and of love and charity towards their neighbours.

The PRAYER.

O GOD, the protector of all, who trust in thee ; who wast pleased to accept the death and passion of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, as an expiation for the sins of mankind, and a ransom of their guilty souls from the torments of hell ! Grant, that I may duly weigh the efficacy of his merits, and faithfully improve the benefits of my redemption. Let not the pleasures of sin betray me, nor the craftiness of Satan deceive me ; but do thou guard and protect me, with thy blessed Spirit, against all spiritual temptations ; and let me always have the danger and care of my soul before my eyes, and the torments of the damned fresh in my memory : so that, by contemplating the misery of others, I may hate their practices and avoid their punishments ; through the all sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.

T H E



THE FIRST PART
OF THE NEW
Whole Duty of Man :
CONTAINING
Our DUTY towards GOD.

SUNDAY I.

I. *Of true Morality, and of the Duty of Man, as taught by natural and revealed Religion; containing the three great branches of our Duty, to GOD, to our NEIGHBOUR, and to OURSELVES. II. Our Duty to GOD, is, to believe in him, and in his affirmations, commands, promises, and threatenings. III. To hope in him, without presumption or despair. IV. To love him, for his excellencies and kindness. V. To fear him, rather than men. VI. To trust in him, in all dangers and wants. VII. To submit to his divine will, both in respect of obedience and patience, in all his commands and disposals.*

I. **T**HE Christian Religion being the means, which God has appointed, for the restoring mankind to his favour, forfeited by wilful disobedience; and for his recovering the Image of God : the Almighty does therein give us a new hope and title to that everlasting happiness, for which man was at first created : but this is only to be hoped for, on certain conditions ; * namely, our lively faith and sincere and hearty endeavours to obey his will ; on the performance and neglect whereof, depend our eternal happiness and misery. It is therefore of the greatest importance to us, to enquire, what that faith is, and what those several things are, to which God requires our obedience. But first (I think)

* See page 11.

it will not be improper to consider, what we are to understand by true Morality.

True morality, in what it consists. *True morality*, in the largest sense of the word, consists in acting agreeably to those relations, which we bear to our creator and fellow-creatures; it takes in even our duty to our blessed Saviour and Redeemer; unless either gratitude be no part of morality; or unless

he, who was the author of our eternal salvation, be entitled to no gratitude from us. But nothing is more common, than to substitute some part of our duty for the whole: of this we have a pregnant instance in those, whom the world miscalls mere moral men. A mere *moral* man, in the language of the world, is he, who, though he live in a state of open disregard of religion in general, or at least a fashionable indifference to it; yet shall do some generous and good-natured actions, and never be guilty of any flagrant breach of honesty: he, who condemns the man, who is wanting in proper returns of gratitude and affection to his fellow-creatures; but never condemns himself, who continually receives, and never acknowledges the favours he receives, from the Author of every good gift. It is absurd, to pretend a love for benevolence, and yet be regardless of the most benevolent being: and it is likewise absurd, to pretend to love him, without a serious examination into his will, never dismissing what bears that venerable stamp, without a fair and impartial hearing of the evidences for the truth of it. On whomsoever the world may bestow the title of *moral* men; yet an indifferent carelessness, and a wilful neglect to examine into God's will and pleasure, is no part of Morality: nay his will (whose pleasure we must do, or unavoidably suffer displeasure) ought to be the uppermost consideration of every man. Yet some may urge. 'That there are several of strict probity, generosity, and worth, without the least tincture of piety.' To which I answer; 'Several have, from their infancy, associated the ideas of happiness and esteem, of misery and disgrace: this makes them decline those actions, which may entail infamy and disgrace upon them; and pursue those, which may beget an esteem for them; esteem being to
' them



‘ them an essential ingredient of happiness: for which
‘ reason they are impatient, to have the favourable ver-
‘ dict, which they pass upon themselves, seconded and
‘ confirmed by the approbation of others; and are un-
‘ willing to do any thing, which may lessen them in the
‘ opinion of their fellow-creatures.’ It is then, the de-
sire of fame, not the love of virtue, which is their in-
centive to good actions: and, if we look abroad into
the world, we shall find it thus in fact. Persons of this
stamp will scorn to do a little thing, through the abhor-
rence of any thing, which may make them cheap and
contemptible in the eye of the world: but they will
not scruple to commit a sin, upon which the world has
stamped a credit, and to which fashion hath given a
sanction. A person, who is ungrateful, especially to
his sovereign benefactor, must be void of every thing,
which is great, glorious, and beautiful in the soul: he
may indeed be actuated, by the love of applause, by
caprice, by the prevailing mode and fashion of the age,
in which he lives; but his mind is too narrow, contrac-
ted, and ungenerous, to be swayed by any fixed and
determined principle of goodness. You may wonder,
at this motley mixture in his character: but, why
should you expect a consistency of life and manners from
a man, who has no religious, and therefore no consistent,
principle to act upon? He, who observes the rules of
morality for the sake of temporal pleasures, will never
perform any act of duty that is highly distasteful to him,
or forego any vice that is pleasant and palatable. This
is the *moral* man, in the language of the world; but,
in the language of reason, he is as immoral a man, as
can be conceived: for he lives daily in the uninterr-
rupted practice of immorality of the deepest dye, *viz.*
ingratitude to his sovereign benefactor; from whom he
has received every thing, and to whom he can return
nothing, but obedience and thanksgiving, the tribute of
a grateful heart. What shall we think, of this set of
men? It would be uncharitable, to suppose them deter-
mined Atheists: it is likely, they imagine, God will
accept the social duties, in lieu of piety: but true Mo-
rality is inseparably connected, with the highest regard
to the deity; and it is an unnatural divorce, to part
them

them asunder: For the only sure ground-work of morality is the prospect of heavenly bliss.

It is certain, the light of nature, discovers to us the being of a God, and so much of his infinite perfection, as to teach us, that he is all good, and hateth every thing that is evil; that he loveth those, who avoid evil and chuse good; and with severe justice will punish evil-doers: so that the light of nature searcheth out the goodness and justice of God, and man's duty and subjection to his creator; and disposes us, to receive the perfect will of the Almighty. This is called natural Religion, which all men might know; and to this they should be obliged, by the mere principles of reason, improved by consideration and experience, without the help of revelation; and they, who live by it, shall also be judged by it, their consciences accusing or else excusing one another. But natural religion (the religion, which the light of nature discovers) is not sufficiently calculated for the generality of mankind, as may be inferred from hence; that, to trace a considerable number of doctrines up to the fountain-head from which they flow, and to pursue them to their remotest consequences, by the strength of unassisted reason, is a task extremely difficult, at least to men of letters, and (I may venture to say) impracticable to the ignorant: besides, pure natural religion may perhaps have existed, in the minds of some few recluse contemplative men; but, was never in fact established by any one nation, from the foundation of the world to the present times, But

The dimness of natural Religion is cleared up by * revealed Religion; the method, by which God makes himself, or his will, known to mankind, over and above what he hath made known to us by the light of nature: not, that God did mean hereby, to put out any part of that natural light, which he had set up in our souls; but to give greater light unto men. The possibility of revealed religion is therefore evident, from the nature

* See Sunday 3. Sect. 1.

Sund. 1.] *Of natural and revealed Religion.* 21

of God and the capacities of men ; as well as from that proof, which is produced to satisfy us concerning a mission from God. An infinite being, who created our souls capable of knowing and loving him, can never want power, to communicate farther light to our minds, and make brighter discoveries of his will and pleasure:

It is reasonable and certain.

it carries no opposition to natural light, that God should reveal his mind by some particular persons to the world ; forasmuch, as the great ignorance and corruption of human nature, and that misery and guilt, which mankind had contracted, made it both necessary and expedient for man. Though natural light ascertain the being of a Deity, and shew us how reasonable it is to pay our adorations to that power, which created and preserves us ; yet it does not sufficiently direct us, in the way and manner of performing it : though it give us some hopes of pardon upon our repentance from the general notion of God's goodness ; yet it prescribes us no certain method for obtaining our reconciliation : so that revealed religion was necessary, both to relieve the wants of men in a natural state, and to recover the lustre and brightness of those principles, which God originally implanted in them, now sullied and impaired by the corruptions of mankind : to add such improvements, as might draw human nature to a true sense of its own bad state and weakness ; and to instruct men in the method of obtaining pardon of their offended Creator.

Why necessary.

The design of those, who would undermine christianity, on the contrary, is plainly this: they are for carving out a religion for themselves, instead of leaving that work to a Being of

Why opposed.

unerring wisdom ; the consequence of which is, that they always take up with a maimed and defective morality, instead of a fixed determined scheme of duties, complete in all its parts, and consistent upon the whole : They are for contriving a religion, which may sit easy upon them ; suited, rather to their own vicious relish of things, than to the genuine standard of uncorrupted reason : They are for doing, what seemeth good in their own short-sighted eyes, dimmed by passion ; instead of acquiescing in the will of that Being, who seeth not as

man

man seeth ; who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in times past, unto the fathers by the prophets but in these last days hath spoken
When published. unto us by his Son Jesus Christ. In the revelation of Christ are contained, Articles of Faith to be believed, precepts of life to be practised, and motives and arguments to enforce obedience: whence it is natural to collect, that the knowledge of the holy scripture is necessary to our eternal salvation ; because it is the great and standing revelation of God to mankind ; wherein the nature of God, and his will concerning our duty, and the terms and conditions of our eternal happiness in another world, are fully and plainly declared to us.

Though there be some things in scripture, which
Must be believed. our reason and understanding cannot fathom ; yet, because we are satisfied they are revealed by God, who cannot lye, whose knowledge is infallible, and whose word is true ; we ought upon this higher, and superior reason, to yield a firm assent to the truth of them : though some complain of the Bible, as not clear and determinate enough in certain points ; yet, perhaps, the main quarrel against it will be found to be, that it is too clear and determinate, in enjoining certain duties, and forbidding certain vices : and, though we meet therein with many precepts of life, which corrupt nature may be unwilling to put in practice ; yet we must remember, it is the Lord commands them, and we should obey with the resignation becoming a child of God : ‘ Lord, not my will, but thine be done ! ’ By the mouth of his holy apostle God hath expressly commanded us, to live *soberly, righteously, and godly* in this present world ; by the word *soberly*, signifying our duty to OURSELVES ; by the word *righteous*, our duty to our NEIGHBOUR ; and by the word *godly* our duty to GOD. As Religion itself is that purity, that virtuous temper and disposition of mind, which exerts itself in a constant endeavour of being like unto God, and of obeying his commands ; which is the principal distinction of men from the inferior orders of creatures, and upon which alone are grounded

*The three
GREAT
branches of
man's duty.*

grounded all hopes of life and happiness hereafter; so the great end and design of religion is, by the trial of men's virtue and integrity in the present world, to qualify them for the happiness of that, which is to come; that they, who have been faithful in a small and temporary trust committed to them here, may hereafter be put in possession of a never-failing inheritance, which shall be their own for ever.

In a matter of so great importance, therefore, it is very wonderful, that a man, who calls himself a reasonable creature, should be careless and indifferent; careless, whether he have any religion, or none; indifferent, whether his religion, when he does profess any, be true or false; careless, when he has embraced the true religion, whether he make any improvement in his practice answerable to it or no: so that the foundation of a Christian's duty is a due regard of *God, our neighbour and ourselves.*

II. 'Our duty towards *God* is, to believe in him, to
 'fear him, and to love him, with all our
 'heart, with all our mind, with all our
 'soul, and with all our strength; to wor-
 'ship him, to give him thanks, to put our
 'whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his
 'holy name and his word, and to serve him truly all
 'the days of our life.* In this short description of
 our duty towards God, we are directed to believe and
 acknowledge the being and self-existence of
 a God: that he is, from everlasting and
 world without end: that he is a spirit,
 whom no man hath seen or can see: that
 he is the great creator and preserver of all things, the
 father of lights; in whom is no variableness, neither
 shadow of turning; clothed with the infinite perfec-
 tions of power, wisdom and goodness, from which all
 the other divine attributes do flow: and that in the
 god-head there are three distinct persons, God the Fa-
 ther, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. He
 therefore, who cometh to God, must thus believe;
 that

*Our duty
to God,
what.*

*Believing
him to be
God.*

* See the first Answer after the Commandments in the Church Catechism.

that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

It is in vain, to make profession of religion, without being first well instructed and firmly persuaded of the being and attributes of God; right notions of which, every one knows, are the foundation of all religion: but then this knowledge must not be a bare speculation; but a serious, practical, affecting impression and deep sense upon the mind, of a supreme being; who created the world by his power, preserves and governs it by his goodness and wisdom, and will judge it with justice, mercy and truth: of such a supreme being, whose glory no eye can behold; whose majesty no thought can comprehend; whose power no strength can resist; from whose presence no swiftness can flee; from whose knowledge no secret can be concealed; whose justice no art can evade; of whose goodness every creature partakes: so that the duty of believing in God implies, not only our believing his being, and his being governor and judge of the world; but also, that we have worthy and honourable apprehensions of his nature and attributes. Now, as without belief in God there can be no religion; so, where there is such a belief in God, the scripture always in course supposes it accompanied with every other part of true religion: and, what those parts are, I shall now inform you. Wherefore

Our *first* approach to God is by FAITH; without which it is impossible to please God. Now
Of Faith which it is impossible to please God. Now
in God. faith is a firm belief of things at present not seen; a conviction upon the mind, of the truth of the promises and threatenings of God, made known in the scriptures; of the certain reality, of the rewards and punishments of the life to come: which enables a man, in opposition to all the temptations of a corrupt world, to obey God in expectation of an invisible reward hereafter. As faith also is a sincere persuasion of the mind, concerning the certainty or credibility of any truth or fact arising from another's testimony: the reason of faith in the holy scriptures is strong and forcible: because that is the testimony of God, concerning those things, in which are contained the means

means of eternal life; which may properly be reduced to these particulars; *affirmations, commands, threatenings, and promises.* And

First of his *affirmations*: such are the creation of the world; the dispensations of providence in former ages; and, above all, the Son of God manifested in the flesh; his life and death, his resurrection and ascension into heaven; the distinction of the blessed Trinity into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the dead; the last judgment, and the rewards and punishments which will ensue upon it. These affirmations of God contained in Scripture, (though above our understanding, and not to be perceived by sense, nor to be seen through with the closest application yet,) if we have faith and trust in his promises, become present unto us. *In his affirmations.*

The next instance, by which we are to shew our faith in God's word, is to believe that all his *commands* are true, just, and fit to be commanded; and that they are the rule and measure of our obedience, to shew us, wherein and how we must obey him. Therefore our faith in his commands, must be constantly shewn by our sincere obedience. *In his commands.*

The *third* thing in scripture, which demands our belief, are God's *promises* of outward necessities, present ease and refreshment, and of all the benefits of Christ's death and passion: the promise of divine guidance to the weakness of our understandings and judgments; of strength in tribulation; of grace under temptations; and of acceptance and pardon, upon our faith and sincere endeavours; which is always to be accounted a necessary condition on our part. The end therefore of our belief in God's promises is, to stir us up to perform the conditions; which when we have done, we may justly apply the promises to ourselves, and expect our share in them: but till then, how sure soever we believe these promises to be, we cannot hope for any benefit from them; seeing, we are not the persons to whom they were made, until we have performed the conditions they require. *In his promises.*

We are also to believe, that God is just and powerful; that he will and is able to *punish* sinners, both with spiritual and tem- *In his threatenings.*

poral afflictions, and eternal destruction: and we are not only to believe, that the terrors of the Lord are recorded for our admonition and caution; but to preserve us from those sins, to which these punishments are justly threatened; and to recover us to repentance, when we have fallen; or to fortify us against compliance, in the hour of temptation. This is the object of faith, fitted to work upon our minds on account of its certainty and importance.

For what

Reasons.

We have all the assurance of the truth of these, that we are capable of in this life, from the dictates of reason and the general consent of mankind, besides the most credible revelation of these things in the gospel. How strange then is it, that some satisfy themselves with the zeal they express for the profession of the true religion, though they dishonour that profession by unrighteous works: That others expect to obtain salvation by the strength of their faith, utterly mistaking the very meaning of the word faith; apprehending it to signify credulity, instead of fidelity; and that they shall be accepted for being confident, instead of faithful servants! That some depend upon certain things, which can be done for them by others; as if any thing could, in the religious sense, be of advantage to any man, which does not at all make him the better man! That others rely upon the merits of Christ: deceiving themselves with an expectation, that Christ will rescue them from punishment, though they themselves reject all the motives by which his gospel proposes to rescue them from sin! And, as to the importance of this faith, every one must own, that the highest hopes and the greatest fears are sufficient springs of human actions: for what can concern us more, than eternal happiness and eternal misery? Thus we may observe, that faith in God, thro' Jesus Christ, includes our obedience to his laws, and produceth, in the heart of a sincere and true believer, an humble hope in his promises.

III. A *second* duty to God is HOPE: which is a

Hope in
God.

strong reliance and dependance upon the truth and goodness of the Lord, for his performance of those things promised on his part; which also is a condition of our acceptance with him. So that an humble hope, the effect of faith, is a proper

a proper homage to God upon the foot of his infallible truth; that he neither can be mistaken himself, nor is under any temptation to deceive us. Whatever he says, must be true, and accordingly claims our firm hope and dependance, though we can have no other evidence for it besides his word: yet we should indeed be very careful, that we have the word of God to support our hope, and that we have used the best means in our power to understand the true meaning of God's word, which are the only means to guard us against those two pernicious extremes, presumption and despair, which interrupt or destroy this duty.

*On what
to be
grounded.*

Its use.

Therefore, though the apostle has taught us in general, to hope all things; we must watch our own corruption, and not suffer it to rely too much upon our own strength. For we are guilty of the great sin of *presumption*, when we neglect those means of grace, which are established in order to enable us to perform our duty; when we rashly run ourselves into temptations, presuming upon our own ability to encounter them; and, even in those trials which the providence of God brings upon us, when we trust more to our own resolution than to his divine assistance; and consequently he, who hopeth for pardon of sins and eternal life, without that repentance and obedience, to which alone they are promised, is a presumptuous hypocrite, whose hope shall perish. For, this self-confident temper often betrays us, to undertake what we have neither capacity nor ability to perform: It makes us neglect those previous measures, which are necessary to accomplish what we design: it teaches us, by dear-bought experience, the frailties and infirmities of our nature: It frequently makes shipwreck of a good conscience, and provokes God to withdraw his grace; which we lay so little stress upon, in order to our preservation. And therefore,

*Presump-
tion.*

To cure this sort of presumption, we should consider the weakness and frailty of human nature, and the frequent instances of it in our own conduct, and how unable we are of ourselves to do any thing that is good: we should reflect upon those eminent examples, which have been fatally betrayed

Its remedy.

by too great a confidence in themselves; and which are set up, as so many marks, for us to avoid those rocks upon which they split. Yet,

We are not to be so borne down with our sins, as
Of Des- to mistrust the mercy of God, and to fall
pair. into the contrary fault, which is *despair*.

For, though it be true, that sin is the saddest slavery in the world; yet it must not break and sink men's spirits, and make them so base and servile, as to deprive them of that courage necessary to rescue themselves from it: For, as long custom and continuance in sin deprives us of our strength; so it discourageth our hopes, both of God's grace and assistance, and of his mercy and forgiveness. But, when this

When the despair is the effect of religious melan-
effect of choly, which is frequently an indisposition
melancholy. of body; then there is no such reason to be cast down. For, when men complain of

want of improvement under the exercise of religious duties, and want of a fervent zeal and love towards God; only because they want warmth and affection in the performance of their duty, which duty they nevertheless do perform sincerely and carefully; then there is no just ground for trouble of mind, upon that account: but they must be taught to comfort themselves by considering, that the different degrees of affection, with which different persons serve God, depend much more upon the accidental difference of their constitutions of body, than any true measure of the goodness of their minds; that in one and the same person there will unavoidably be different degrees of affection at different times, according to the present temper of his body, the order or disorder of his spirits, the natural passions and commotions of his mind, without any real change in his moral dispositions; and that no man can at all times keep up an equal vigour of mind. Or, if, after his best endeavours in the course of a virtuous life, a man cannot yet find in himself that passionate love of the supreme Good, which he finds some writers have described in an unintelligible manner; this is no just ground of uneasiness at all: for whoever sincerely obeys the commandments of God in the course of a virtuous and religious life, needs no other mark or proof of his love towards him. Or, if it be an apprehension,
that

that possibly they may be excluded from mercy, by some positive decree and fore-appointment of God; this is absolutely contrary to all our natural notions of the divine attributes, to conceive that the infinitely merciful and good God should, for his own pleasure, and not for any wickedness of theirs, eternally decree any of his creatures to be miserable: Neither in scripture indeed is there any foundation for any such apprehension, whatever there may be in the writings of some unskilful interpreters. Nor can there be any just reason of despair, even to those, whose minds are troubled at the remembrance of past sins: for though they be, and ought to be, such a trouble of mind, as nothing but effectual repentance and amendment can remove; yet, when amendment has really taken place, then the sorrow for what is past may reasonably be relieved by the assurance of pardon. For, though the great and principal promise of pardon be made indeed to unbelievers, at their conversion and being baptised; yet there is also sufficient encouragement given, even to relapsing sinners to repent. The despair then we condemn, is a disorder, which consists in a settled rooted persuasion, that we shall never obtain mercy, let us do what ever we can; for it is no temper or state of mind worthy of blame, to despair of mercy while we continue in sin. But,

When the effect of our sins.

The hope we have in God, through Christ Jesus, is a remedy against this sin: for, as by despair, the devil would persuade a sinner he can never obtain mercy; so does God give a certain hope of eternal glory, to all that will seek for mercy by sincere repentance and obedience through Jesus Christ. How then can a rational creature give up his reason so far, as to give himself up for lost; when the God that made him, and is to reward or punish him, doth promise his mercy to as many, as will change their evil course of life and walk in his ways? Yet, we must not stop here: For,

Its remedy.

IV. A *third* duty to God is Love. Now to love God, is to possess our minds with such a due sense and estimation of the excellencies and perfections, which are in the divine nature, as may make us look upon God as our chief good; make choice of him, as the only proper

The love of God, What.

object of our happiness ; and prefer his cause and interest before any thing else, which may come in competition with it. Therefore our Saviour expressly declares it, as the first and great commandment ; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind* ; that is, we are to serve God with all those faculties, which he has given us : Not, that the love of God is to be exclusive of all other loves, but of all other rival affections ; that, whenever the love of God and that of the world come in competition, the former undoubtedly ought to take place of the latter. To love the Lord with all our heart, signifies to love him with all sincerity, with an undissembled affection. To love God, is not merely to do what he commands ; but it is to do it, because he commands it. To love God with all our soul, signifies to serve him with the whole soul, with an unreserved obedience. God is not to share a divided affection in our breast, an affection divided between piety and sin ; but he is to reign unrivalled by any darling vice. To love God then with all our soul, is the same, as to have respect unto all his commandments. To love the Lord with all our strength, is to put forth the active powers of the soul, in loving and serving him : It is, to rouse ourselves from all supineness and listless idleness : It is, to quicken the wheels and springs of action, which moved on heavily before : It is, to do well, without being weary of well-doing : It is to lay out our endeavours, that we may have a competent sense to discern, a sincere inclination to embrace, and a steady resolution to hold fast, what is best and most pleasing to the Deity. In fine,

We must love God sincerely and affectionately ; we must desire to please him and to perform his will ; we must desire to be made acceptable to him, and to become partakers of his favour and rewards, rather than of the unreasonable pleasures of unrighteousness : because all the reasons, for the loving any object or thing in the world, do more forcibly recommend to us the love of God. He is in himself most excellent, fit to be our chief happiness, and hath actually shewn himself our best friend : He has annexed a present, as well as a future reward, to a good life ; and has so interwoven our duty and hap-

happiness together, that while we are discharging our obligations to the one, we are at the same time making provision for the other: upon all which accounts our best love is due to him.

His goodness and excellency tarnish all the beauty and excellence of creatures: There is none good, but one, that is God; because he is good in such a sense, as none can be acknowledged good besides. He alone is perfectly, originally, necessarily, and unchangeably good: He has every excellence in the highest degree; almighty power, unerring wisdom, infinite goodness, unblemished truth, spotless holiness; every thing, fit to raise the wonder, and engage the delight, of men and angels; and his glory shines out, in the works of creation and providence. Power and wisdom may command dread and admiration; yet nothing but goodness can challenge our love and affection. He gave us our beings, and in the whole course of our lives, his goodness prevents numberless evils from falling upon us; which, with all our reason and understanding, we could by no means either prevent or avoid: And when we were fallen from that happiness, for which we were, at first designed, he was pleased to restore us to a new capacity of it, by sending his only Son into the world to die for us; the benefits of whose death and passion no man can lose, but by his own fault. He has endued us with reason and natural conscience, to distinguish between good and evil, and to forewarn us of the certainty of a future judgment: He has confirmed this natural conscience, with the additional help of an express revelation: and, that sinners may (if possible) be brought to repentance, he, with much long-suffering and forbearance, defers their punishment; and if they do repent, he forgives and pardons them, as a father receives a returning child. Again, we cannot but love him, who is good, and does us good.

God's excellency.

God's kindness to us.

And if God vouchsafe to love us, we must also shew our love to him, by first desiring to please him, and also by a desire to enjoy him: For the first token of any one's love is the doing, what is thought most acceptable to the person loved; so that a true love of God will shew itself first in keeping his commandments.

Fruit of love is a desire of pleasing.

For that is its description by St. John; and where this token is wanting, there can be no love of God. So that, if any one continue in a wilful breach of many, nay, but of any one command of his, he is deceived; in thinking that the love of God abideth in him: Because as the excellency and kindness of God is most transcendent; so our love of him must be most fervent, and preferable to every other thing. If our love of

*Love of
God when
sincere.*

God be sincere, we shall entertain high and admiring thoughts of him, according to those discoveries, which he hath made of himself: we shall reverence him, as the most perfect being; and give him the glory of his excellencies, as we turn our thoughts either to the works of nature in the creation, or to the wonders of grace in our redemption, or to the prospect of glory in the world to come. If we act in concert with that being, whose tender mercy is over all his works, by shewing mercy (as far as we can) in all ours: If we conscientiously endeavour to discharge all the duties he has enjoined us, without reluctance; and to submit to all his dispensations, without murmuring: If we address ourselves to him with that holy fear, which awes the turbulent passions into composure; but does not depress the spirit, or beget an abject and unmanly way of thinking: If we, who look (or ought to look) up to him with reverence as the great judge and lawgiver of the universe, chiefly delight to consider him under the endearing characters of a Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Benefactor. If, before we compose ourselves to sleep, we recommend ourselves to his almighty care, who neither slumbers nor sleeps: if, as soon as we rise, we recommend ourselves to his superintendency, who maketh his sun to rise upon the just and unjust; humbly desiring, that, as that sun dispels the darkness and unwholesome vapours of the night; so he, the great sun of righteousness, who arose with healing in his wings, would drive from us all evil; all evil, whether of mind, body, or estate: if we commit all our concerns in general to his providence and fatherly goodness; and upon every extraordinary emergency, make a more particular application to him for his direction, who never faileth them that seek him. These undoubtedly are the only genuine

nuine tests and significant expressions, of an undisssembled love to God ; and they will procure for us the blessed effect of that infinite love, which, being stronger than death, disarmed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory : And such a soul will say, ' I see that ' God alone can be my portion ; in his favour is my ' life : without that, though I had all the world, I ' should be destitute and miserable.' This love arises from the sense of benefits received : It is like the filial love of a dutiful child to a tender and indulgent parent, upon a review of his care and kindness, in preserving him, providing for him, doing him all the good that lies in his power ; which engages him, to study to requite his parents in the best manner he can. Such is the love of God found in a pious soul. And therefore,

Let those, who (though they really love, and fear, and serve God, in the course of a virtuous and religious life ; yet, because they feel not in themselves that warmth of affection, to which many enthusiasts pretend) are afraid and suspect, that they do not love God sincerely as they ought ; be corrected, by considering, that there is no other mark so infallible of the goodness of a Tree, as the fruit which it brings forth. It is not a religious mood or humour, but a religious temper : It is not, to be now and then pleased with our Maker in the gaiety of the heart, when (more properly speaking) we are pleased with ourselves : It is not, to have a few occasional transient acts of complacency and delight in the Lord rising in our minds, when we are in a vein of good humour : But it is to have a lasting, habitual, and determinate resolution to please the Deity, rooted and grounded in our hearts, and influencing our actions throughout. If they live in obedience to the commands of God, they need no other evidence of the sincerity of their hearts towards him : for all other signs may possibly be erroneous ; but this is the very thing itself signified. Love of goodness, righteousness, and truth, is love of God : for God is goodness and truth ; and he, who loves these virtues, which are the moral perfections of the divine nature, does therefore love God most perfectly ; because he loves those excellencies, for the sake of which God expects that we should love him above all things.

*Who live
in this love.*

The other fruit of love is the desire of enjoying: *Desire of* this is the case of all men. They desire
enjoying. the company of those they love: so he
 that sincerely loves God, will not only be
 constant in prayer, meditation, hearing his word, and
 receiving the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper,
 with chearfulness and devotion; but will earnestly wish
 to be dissolved, and to be with Christ in the glory of
 God the Father; with an entire resignation of this
 world and all its enjoyments, to God's will and pleasure.

SUNDAY I. PART II.

V. The *fourth* duty to God is FEAR. Though love
 casteth out all servile fear, yet it does not exclude such
 a fear as a dutiful son shews to a very affectionate, but
 a very wise and prudent father; and we may rejoice
 in God with reverence, as well as serve him with glad-
 ness: For love, if not allayed and tempered with fear,
 and the apprehensions of divine justice, would betray
 the soul into a sanguine confidence and an ill-grounded
 security; Fear, on the other hand, if not sweetened
 and animated by love, would sink the mind into a fatal
 despondency. Therefore fear is placed in the soul, as a
 counterpoise to the more enlarged, kindly, and gene-
 rous affections. There are two bridles or restraints,
 which God hath put upon human nature,
Fear of *shame* and *fear*. *Shame* is the weaker, and
God, why hath place only in those, in whom there are
necessary. some remains of virtue: *Fear* is the
 stronger, and works upon all, who love themselves, and
 desire their own preservation. Therefore in this de-
 generate state of mankind, Fear is that passion, which
 hath the greatest power over us, and by which God and
 his laws take the surest hold of us: our desire, and
 love, and hope, are not so apt to be wrought upon,
 by the representation of virtue, and the promises of
 reward and happiness; as our fear is, from the appre-
 hensions of divine displeasure: For, though we have
 lost in a great measure the relish of true happiness, yet
 we still retain a quick sense of pain and misery. So that
 fear is grounded on a natural love of ourselves, and is
 inter-

interwoven with a necessary desire of our own preservation: And therefore religion usually makes its first entrance into us, by this passion. Hence perhaps it is, that *Solomon*, more than once, calls the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom.

To fear God, is to have such a due sense of his majesty, and holiness, and justice, and goodness, as shall make us not dare to offend him: for each of these attributes is proper to raise a suitable fear, in every considering mind: his *majesty*, a fear, lest we affront it by being irreverent; his *holiness*, a fear, lest we offend it by being carnal; his *justice*, a fear, lest we provoke it by being presumptuous; and his *goodness*, a fear, lest we forfeit it by being unthankful. So that this fear of God is not the superstitious dread of an arbitrary or cruel being; but that awe and regard, which necessarily arises in the mind of every man, who believes and habitually considers himself as living and acting in the sight of an omnipotent Governor, of perfect justice, holiness, and purity; who sees every thought, as well as every action; who cannot be imposed upon by any hypocrisy; who, as certainly as there is any difference between good and evil, cannot but approve the one and detest the other; and whose government consists, in rewarding what he approves, and punishing what he hates. This fear of God is the foundation of religion: For, the great support of virtue among men is the sense upon their minds, of a supreme Governor and Judge of the universe, who will finally and effectually reward what is in itself essentially worthy of reward, and punish what is worthy of punishment: And consequently fear brings us into subjection to God's authority, and enforces the practice of our duty; for, the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil. Yet

It may with sorrow be observed, that the fear of men, or a dread not to provoke them, is too often stronger than the fear of God; though God be infinitely more to be dreaded than man: Which is the lesson we are taught by Christ himself; who says, Fear not them, which can kill the body; that is, fear not men so much as God; fear him infinitely more. It is very lawful for us to fear men, and to stand in awe of their power;

*The folly of
fearing men
more than
God.*

power ; because they can kill the body ; and death is terrible : but, when the power of man comes in competition with omnipotency ; and what man can do to the body in this world, with what God can do to the body and soul in the other ; there is no comparison between the terror of the one and the other. God can do all, that man can do : He can kill the body, and that by an immediate act of his divine power : He can blast our reputation, ruin our estate, and afflict our bodies with the sharpest pains, and smite us with death. And God doth all that with ease, which men many times do with labour : they use the utmost of their wit and power, to do us mischief ; but God can do all things by a word : if he do but speak, judgments come ; we are but a little dust, and the least breath of God can disperse it : he hath all creatures at his command, ready to execute his will : So that whatever man, or any creatures, can do ; that God can do also, and infinitely more. His power is not confined to the body, but he hath power over the spirit : He can make body and soul miserable, not only in this world, but in the other also ; and that, not only for a few years, but for all eternity. Therefore

The fear of men will not be a sufficient plea and excuse for men ; it will not be enough to *Its danger.* say, ' This I was awed into by the apprehension of danger, or by the fear of sufferings ; Or, that I chose rather to trust God with my soul, than men with my estate ; to save my life, I renounced my religion, was ashamed of Christ, and denied him before men : ' Though our Saviour has told us plainly, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation ; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with his holy angels.* ' Thus they, who out of fear of men offend God, are guilty of this folly ; they incur the danger of a greater evil : for, whilst they are endeavouring to escape the hands of men that shall die, they fall into the hands of the living God. Do we fear the wrath of man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; who can but afflict a little, and for a little while ? And is not the wrath of the eternal God much more dreadful ? For, as we are sinners, our fear is justly increased from the holiness

holiness of his nature, the justice of his government, and the threatnings of his laws. But, to conclude : as our offences respect men, it is possible we may transgress against them, and they not know it : one may steal his neighbour's goods, or defile his wife ; yet keep it so privately, as not to be suspected, and so never to be brought to punishment for it. But this can never be done in regard to God, who knows the most secret thoughts of our hearts ; and consequently, though we sin ever so privately, he is sure to find us out ; and will as surely, except we repent in time, punish us for it eternally.

VI. A *5th* duty to God is that of TRUST : For, the homage due to God in all our wants and dangers, is to trust in him ; whereby we declare our constant dependance upon God for

*Of Trust
in God.*

the relief of all our wants and dangers, whether spiritual or temporal, and to support us under all afflictions and temptations ; founded upon a persuasion of his all-sufficiency, and of his inviolable faithfulness to perform his word and engagements. As far as I trust a man, I suppose him able to do what I trust him for ; that he hath given me some encouragement to believe his willingness, and that he will not deceive me : and it must be so, in any regular trust in God, who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think. But then it is of the

*In his
power.*

utmost concern to us, that we have no expectation from God for things which he hath never promised. Where he has been pleased, positively to declare what he will do, we should firmly depend, whatever difficulties or discouragements may lie in the way of our hope : But, where his promises are made with a reserve for his own sovereignty ; or the superiority of his divine wisdom ; as

*In his truth
and promises.*

he knows, far better than we, what is good for man in this life, there we should not allow ourselves to be positive in our expectations of particular events, but cast our care upon him in a more general manner ; relying upon this, that, in the way of duty, he will do that, which (upon the whole) is best for us to be done.

In all our dangers and wants both spiritual and temporal. In all conditions that befall us, we must repose ourselves upon God, in confidence of his support and deliverance, of his care and providence, to prevent and divert the evils we fear, whether spiritual or temporal; or of his gracious help, to bear us up under them; and of his mercy and goodness, to deliver us from them, when he sees best; provided

always we be careful to do our own duty to him. * Every man, who believes thus of God (as every man must do, who believes there is a God) will first apply himself to God, and beseech him with all earnestness and importunity, that he would permit him to refer his affairs to him, and be pleased to undertake the care of them; and he will, without any demur or difficulty give up himself wholly to him, to guide and govern him, and to dispose of him as to him should seem best. Therefore, if God hath prevented us herein, and without our desire taken this care upon himself; we ought to rejoice in it, as the greatest happiness which could possibly have befallen us; and we should, without any further care and anxiety, using our own best diligence, and studying to please him, chearfully leave ourselves in his hands; with the greatest confidence and security, that he will do all that for us, which is really best; and with a firm persuasion, that the condition and circumstances of life, which he shall chuse for us, will be the very same, which we would chuse for ourselves, were we endued with the same wisdom. Therefore let it be considered, how great a mischief we frequently do ourselves, by loading our minds with a multitude of vexatious and tormenting cares, when we may so securely cast our burthen upon God: And let us earnestly beg of God, that his watchful and merciful providence would undertake the care of us: that he would fit and prepare us for every condition into which he hath designed to bring us; and that he would teach us, to demean ourselves in it, as we ought: That he would consider our frailties; and lay no greater load of affliction upon us, than he will give

* See Christian Fortitude and Patience in Sunday 16. Sect. 5.

give us grace and strength to bear : That, if he sees it good, to exercise any of us with afflictions and sufferings in any kind ; he would make us able to stand in that evil day : and, when we have done all, to stand.

And let us be sure, to keep within the bounds of our duty ; trying no unlawful ways, for our ease and preservation, and for our rescue from the evils which we fear and lie under : For we may assure ourselves, that God is never more concerned to appear for us ; than when out of conscience of our duty to him, we are contented, rather to suffer, than work our deliverance by undue means. Let us commit ourselves to him, in well-doing ; and do nothing (no, not for the cause of religion) which is contrary to the plain rules and precepts of it. Should we (instead of vain murmurings and complaints, and terrifying ourselves with fears of what may never happen) follow the example of holy David, betake ourselves to prayer, and by this means engage the providence of God, for our protection from evil, or for our support under it : we should certainly do much better ourselves ; and contribute much more, than we can do any other way, to the prevention of any evil we can fear, or to the mitigating or shortening of it, as to God's infinite wisdom and goodness shall seem best. To this we are directed by St. Peter, when he exhorts us to cast all our care upon God, who careth for us ; according to what he had been taught by our Saviour Christ, who in his divine sermon on the mount says : *Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on : is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ! Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature ? and why take you thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven ; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ?*

*Not seeking
to deliver
ourselves
by any sin.*

There-

Therefore take no thought ; saying, What shall we eat ? or what shall we drink ? or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow ; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself : sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Matt. vi. 25, &c.

That is to say ; not, that we are to live at random, secure and careless of whatever may befall us : not, that we are to look into the consequences of our own or other men's actions, and not to endeavour any ways to foresee and prevent approaching dangers : not that we are to make no manner of provision for future events ; to lay up nothing, and concern ourselves about nothing, but what is present and immediately before us : doubtless, sagacity in discerning, and a prudent forecast towards inclining evils, are not only allowable, but commendable qualities ; frugality and diligence are certainly virtues : but our Saviour's meaning plainly is, to forbid such a care and concern for future accidents, as is attended with uneasiness, distrust, and despondency ; such a degree of thoughtfulness, as takes up, dejects, and distracts the mind. We are not to pry too curiously into the remote issues of things, nor perplex and afflict ourselves with the forethought of imagined dangers : we are not to guard against want, by an eager anxious pursuit of wealth ; nor be so careful in providing supplies for the necessities of this life, as to forget that we are designed for another : it is very unreasonable, to disquiet ourselves about distant evils ; it often happening, that the presence of the things themselves suggests better expedients, wiser and quicker councils to us, than all our wisdom and forethought at a distance can do. 'The morrow (says our Lord) shall take thought, for the things of itself ; that is, it shall bring along with it a power and strength of mind, answerable to its necessities ; a frame of spirit, every way suited to our circumstances and occasions.

He,

He, who terrifies himself with the apprehension of future evils, declares in effect, that he doth not absolutely rely upon God for his ordering and disposing them: and he who doth not absolutely trust God with all his concerns, has no right to his protection and defence, no reason to expect his support and assistance; but is left, to work out every thing as well as he can, by the dint of second causes, by his own parts, policy, and prudence. But, how wretched is the case of him, who has brought his affairs to such a pass, as to be deprived of his best and faithfullest counsellor, his most kind and most potent friend; and to live, as it were, without God in the world? It is a fearful thing, to fall into the hands of the living God: and surely, next to that, it is a fearful thing, to take ourselves out of his hands, and exempt ourselves from his care; which he is justly supposed to do, who sets himself (with any degree of solicitude) to take thought for the morrow.

Let us not, therefore, by our rashness and folly, provoke trouble and danger, and bring them upon ourselves: Let us, according to our Saviour's council, be *wise as serpents*, and *innocent as doves*: Let us use that care and prudence, which is consistent with innocence and a good conscience; and, when we have done that, let us be no farther solicitous, but resign ourselves and all our cares, to the good pleasure of God, and to the disposal of his wise providence; and leave it to him, who made the world, to govern it: for no doubt, he understands it much better than we.

Here it cannot be improper to remark, that the vain desire of knowing beforehand things to come, is such a desire of the knowledge of secret things, as is not consistent with our trust in God; neither is it permitted us, by the present circumstances and condition of our nature. It is also very observable, that those who have least knowledge of God, and least trust in his promises, and least understanding; have always the greatest confidence in groundless pretences and unwarrantable methods of pursuing knowledge. But to pretend to know things by the stars, introdu-

The sinfulness of fortune telling, &c.

ces fatality, destroys religion, and is a distrust of the Almighty: witchcraft, fortune-telling, and all unlawful arts, either real or pretended, when ever they have any reality in them, are evidently diabolical; and, when they have no reality, they are cheats and lying impostures; the works of him, who was a liar from the beginning. Let me therefore exhort you, in the words of St. Paul: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.* Phil. iv. 6.

VII. A *sixth* duty to God is HUMILITY; that *Humility or submission to God in respect of obedience.* lowliness of mind, which begets an entire resignation to the will of God, and a dependance upon him in all dangers, which relate either to our bodies or souls: a disposition, arising from the true knowledge of ourselves, and a sense of our own weak and sinful condition; in consequence of which, we take to ourselves the shame and confusion, due to our follies; and give to God the glory, of all the good we receive, or are able to do. He, who desires to be truly humble, and clothed with humility; must do nothing, on purpose to draw the eyes and good opinion of men, but purely to please God; he must receive from the hands of God all afflictions and trials, without murmuring against his justice: so that the submission of a christian consists in a firm persuasion of mind, that nothing happens to us, but by the will and permission of God; and that we never presume too much upon the best of our works: for all our righteousness is as filthy rags; so that, when we have done all those things which are commanded, we are no better than unprofitable servants.

The unworthiness of our best works.

Again, it consists in our being persuaded, that he loves us better than we do ourselves, and knows the best methods of making us happy. Such a submission, as this, will make us easy under the greatest afflictions: and, though God should visit us with the most intolerable disappointments and losses in this world, it will either stop our mouths against providence, because it is the work of

Submission in respect of patience.

God;

God; or, it will enable us with courage to receive them, with the resignation of good old Eli: *It is the Lord; let him do, what seemeth good to him.*

Therefore, when ever he strikes with the rod of correction, we must not only bear it, because we cannot avoid it; but to our patience should add our thanks; for that we, having highly provoked his goodness, are not by his justice given over to our own hearts lusts, but are still preserved under the wings of his mercy: and this should be so far from causing us to repine against God, that it should raise in us an immediate reformation, repentance, confession, contrition, and full purposes of amendment with satisfaction. Some of the greatest afflictions and calamities of life are not always real and positive inflictions of judgments from the hand of God, but merely the original differences of men's state and circumstances; the variety of God's creation, the different talents committed to men's charge, the different stations God has placed men in, for their various trials, and in order to the exercise of a diversity of duties. The like may be said, of want of honour and power, want of children to succeed in our estates and families, weakness of body, shortness of life, and the like; nay, and even of spiritual disadvantages themselves likewise; want of capacity and good understanding, want of knowledge and instruction, want of many opportunities and means of improvement, which others enjoy.

None of these can be any just ground, of complaint against God; or any reason, why we should not with all satisfaction acquiesce in his divine good pleasure; since all these things are only different distributions of such free gifts, as he, not being obliged to bestow on any man, may therefore without controversy divide to every man in what measure and proportion he thinks fit: only this we may depend upon; that in such measure only he will exact our duty, as he enables us to perform it; and that to whom little is given, of him shall not be much required: and this brings

Thankfulness for God's corrections.

*the wings
Fruitfulness under them.*

Submission to his wisdom in his commands.

brings all the seeming inequalities in the world, to a real equality at last.

In all circumstances of life therefore, we are not to be uneasy, that God has made us inferior to others; or that he has set before us greater hardships and difficulties to go through; or that he has given us less abilities, and fewer opportunities, than others: but we are to apply ourselves wholly, with all resignation, to the proper duties of that station, or of those circumstances, wherein God has been pleased to place us. Even poverty is not an occasion of envying the rich; but a strong obligation, to study the duties of humility, contentment, and resignation: neither is ignorance and want of capacity, meanness of parts and want of instruction, a reason to murmur, that God has not entrusted us with more talents; but an admonition, to take care that we make a right improvement of those few which are given us. Weakness of body is not a just occasion to repine against God, for not giving us strength and health wherewith he has blessed some others; but a continual argument to us, to exercise and improve such virtues, as are more peculiar to the mind. Lastly, the consideration, of the uncertainty and shortness of life itself, ought not to make us spend our time in fruitless complaints of the vanity and meanness of our state; but to cause us perpetually to consider, that it is not of so great importance, how long we live, as how well: and it ought to be a sufficient satisfaction to truly pious and religious persons, that God has reserved for them their portion in another life. Therefore we should be content in every state and condition of life, let whatever befall us; how contrary soever to our own inclinations, and how much soever, they contradict those proposals of happiness and enjoyment, which we have framed within our own breasts.

Both which parts of christian humility are perfected, by a contempt of the world: and the contempt of the world is shewn, by looking upon the best of our works to be full of infirmity and pollution; and on all worldly

How humility is perfected.

Sund. 1.] *Of Submission to God's Wisdom.* 45

worldly enjoyments as little and inconsiderable, in comparison of the purity and perfection of God, and that happiness, which God hath prepared for those that love him: by being content with the portion of the good things of this life, which the wise providence of God hath allotted to our share; without purchasing the enjoyment of them, by the committing of any wilful sin; without being anxiously concerned for the increase of them, or extremely depressed when they make themselves wings and fly away: by a moderate use of all those lawful pleasures, which relate to the gratification of our senses and fleshly appetites; as becomes persons, who expect their portion, not in the pleasures of this world, but in the happiness of the next: by a low esteem of riches and honour; so that we be ready to forsake them, whenever they come in competition with the performance of our duty to God: by bearing the afflictions and calamities of this life, with patience and constancy; and by looking unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of our faith.

Which humble, resigned, and depending frame of mind is the proper disposition for devotion, *Its fruits.* the parent of religious fear, and the seed-plot of all christian virtues. It makes us ready to receive the revelations of God's will to mankind, and as careful to practise what he enjoins: It restrains the immoderate desire of honour, by teaching us not to exalt ourselves, nor do any thing through strife or vain glory: It opposes self-love which is planted in our nature; and when indulged, will be too apt to deceive us in the judgment we form concerning ourselves: It also makes us ready, to believe what God reveals, and to pay our due obedience to him, from the sense of our own meanness and his excellency: and, by removing the great hindrance of our faith, which is a vanity to distinguish ourselves from the unthinking croud; it makes us put our hope and confidence in God; because, being weak and miserable of ourselves, without him we can do nothing. It encreases our love to God, by making us sensible how unworthy we are of the many favours we receive from him: It teaches us, to rejoice in the prosperity of our neighbour, by infusing the most favourable opinion of his worth: It disposes us, to

to relieve those wants, and compassionate those afflictions, which we ourselves have deserved : It makes us patient, under all the troubles and calamities of life ; because we have provoked God by our sins : and therefore, neither prayers nor fasts will find acceptance, unless they proceed from an humble mind ; and our best works will stand us in little stead, if they be stained with pride and boasting of our own strength.

SUNDAY II.

- I. *Of the honour due to GOD, in his house or church.* II. *By reverencing and maintaining his ministers with tithes and offerings.* III. *By keeping the Lord's day.* IV. *By observing the feasts, and V. fasts of the church ; whether public, private, or the fast of Lent.* VI. *In his word, the holy scriptures or rule of faith ; by catechising and preaching.* VII. *In his sacraments ; by receiving baptism and performing the vows and obligations thereof.*

I. **A** *Seventh duty to God is Honour.* As honour is a duty, which in the nature of things is owing to those in a superior relation to us : and as the very notion of it implies it being due to such ; by how much God is infinitely greater, than those whom we acknowledge to be our superiors upon earth, by so much ought we to have a profounder regard, and veneration for him. They honour God, who serve him in spirit and in truth, in all the ways of his appointed worship, and due obedience to his laws ; which command us, not only to pay this honour immediately to himself, but to have a due esteem for his *house*, his *ministers*, his *day*, his *word*, his *sacraments*, and his *name* ; as things, which nearly relate or belong to him.

First, we must honour God in his *house*, that is, in the church ; so called on account of its peculiar relation to him, being solemnly dedicated and set apart for his public worship and service ;

Sund. 2.] *Of honouring God in his House.* 47

vice; and on account of God's peculiar presence, in the administration of his word and sacraments. The dedication of it to sacred uses makes it properly his own; and the praying to him, praising him, and celebrating the holy mysteries, according to his appointment, are demonstrations of his peculiar presence.

In what manner.

Consequently we ought to reverence God's house, by furnishing it with all decency for the worship of God; by repairing and adorning it; by keeping it from profane and common use, and applying it wholly to the business of religion; by offering up our prayers in it, with fervour and frequency; by hearing God's word, with attention and resolutions of obeying it; by celebrating the holy mysteries with humility and devotion; and by using all such outward testimonies of respect, as the church enjoins, and as are established by the custom of the age we live in, as marks of honour and reverence. This bodily worship is recommended by Solomon, when he charges us, to look to our feet, when we go to the house of God.

This will correct any whispering or talking about worldly affairs, any negligent or light carriage; and will suppress any provocations to laughter, or any critical or nice observation of others: And, on the contrary, it will excite in us sincere intentions of glorifying God, and making his honour and praise known among men; acknowledging hereby our entire dependance upon his bounty, both for what we enjoy, and what we farther expect. It will promote hearty endeavours of performing his blessed will, and of being that in our lives and actions, which we beg to be made in our prayers: It will teach us to govern our outward behaviour by such measures, as the church prescribes; *viz.* to kneel, stand, bow, or sit, as the rubrick hath enjoined to be complied with in public: all which different postures we ought to use with such gravity and seriousness, as may shew, how intent we are on the worship of God; yet avoiding such behaviour, as may be apt to disturb those near us, and to give occasion to others, to suspect us of acting a formal hypocritical part.

Directions for our behaviour at Church.

If

If we come to church before the service begins, which we should always endeavour to do; after we have performed our private devotions, we should in silence recollect ourselves, and by serious thoughts dispose our minds to a due discharge of the ensuing duties: for, the discoursing about news and business is improper upon such occasions, God's house being never designed for the carrying on of worldly concerns. But it is still more unbecoming, while we are at our prayers, to observe those rules of ceremony, which in other places are fit to be practised towards one another; because, when we are offering our requests to the great God of heaven and earth, our attention should be so fixed, that we should have no leisure to regard any thing else. To this end, when we put our bodies into a praying posture, with which I think leaning and lolling seem very inconsistent, we should do well to fix our eyes downward; that we may not be diverted by any objects near us; and at the same time resolve, not to suffer them to gaze about, whereby they do but fetch in matter for wandering thoughts. This attention will be much improved by silence: therefore we should never pray aloud with the minister, but where it is enjoined, endeavouring to make his prayer our own by a hearty *Amen*. Great care must be taken not to repeat after the minister, what peculiarly relates to his office: This I mention the rather, because I have frequently observed some devout people following him, that officiates, in the exhortation and absolution, as well as the confession; which, if thoroughly considered, must be judged a very absurd and improper expression of the people's devotion, because those are distinguishing parts of the priest's office. Therefore the best preparation of mind for our joining in the publick prayers, is, to abstract our thoughts (as much as we can) from worldly business and concerns, that we may call upon God with attention and application of soul: to keep our passions in order and subjection, that none of them may interrupt us, when we approach the throne of grace: to possess our minds with such an awful sense of God's presence, that we may behave ourselves with gravity and reverence: to work in ourselves such a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency, as may make us earnest

Sund. 2.] *Of honouring God in his Ministers.* 49

earnest for the supplies of divine grace ; such a sorrow for our sins, such humiliation for them, and such a readiness to forgive others, as may prevail upon God, for the sake of Christ's suffering, to forgive us : to recollect those many blessings, which we have received ; that we may shew forth his praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to his service.

II. *Secondly*, the Almighty is also to be honoured in his *ministers* ; by that love, which is due unto them, as the stewards of the mysteries of God, and those who watch over our souls.

In his ministers.

Therefore we ought to shew our love to such as administer to us in holy things ; in being ready to assist them in all difficulties, and in vindicating their reputations from those aspersions, which bad men are apt to load them with : in covering their real infirmities, and interpreting all their actions in the best sense ; never picking out the faults of a few, and making them a reproach to the whole sacred order. And as ministers are in a peculiar manner servants of the great God of heaven and earth, to whose bounty we owe all of that we enjoy ; therefore we should dedicate a part of what we receive to his immediate service, as an acknowledgment

In our possessions.

of his sovereignty and dominion over all. What makes this duty further reasonable is, that in order to be instruments in God's hand of procuring our eternal welfare, they renounce all ordinary means of advancing their fortunes : they surrender their pretensions to worldly interests : and therefore it is highly fit, that their laborious and difficult employment, purely for God's glory and our salvation, should receive from us the encouragement of a comfortable and honourable subsistence, upon this and the like considerations: That parents may be encouraged, to devote their children of good parts to the service of the altar ; for it is not probable, they will sacrifice an expensive education to an employment which is attended with small advantages. And, if some persons have zeal enough, to engage in the ministry without a respect to the rewards of it ; yet common prudence ought to put us upon such methods, as are most likely to excite men of the best parts and ability to undertake the sacred function ; that the best cause may have the best management, and the purest religion the ablest defenders. It is also necessary, their

maintenance bear some proportion to the dignity of their character, and raise them above the contempt of those, who are too apt to be influenced by outward appearances; for, though wisdom be better than strength, nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. They should also be enabled, not only to provide for their families; which is a duty incumbent upon them, as well as the rest of mankind; but to be examples to their flock in charity and in doing good, as well as in all other parts of their office and duty.

The wisdom of our christian forefathers thought these considerations of such force, that the government has appointed for the maintenance of our ministers the house and glebe, * and the oblations; which were the voluntary offerings of the faithful, very considerable in the primitive times: so that the necessities of the church were liberally supplied, from the great bounty of the people: and when, upon the spreading of christianity, a more fixed and settled maintenance was required; somewhat of the ancient custom was still retained in voluntary oblations: besides tithes, † which

* These were the original endowments of a church, without which it cannot be supplied, and with which it could not be consecrated; and upon which was founded the original right of a patronage. For it appears from the Lord Coke, that the first kings of the realm had all the lands of England in demesne, and Les Grand Manours and les Royalties they reserved to themselves; and with the remnant they enfeoffed the barons of the realm for the defence thereof, with such jurisdiction as the court baron now hath: and about this time it was, when all the lands of England were the king's demesne, that Ethelwulf, almost nine hundred years since, conferred the tithes of all the kingdom upon the church by his royal charter; which is extant in abbot Ingulf, and Matthew of Westminster.

† We do not read of tithes paid the apostles, because the zeal of christians in their times was so great; that as many, as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and laid the price of them at the apostles feet; and the devotion of the following ages, even to the latter end of the fourth century, was so remarkable for the liberality of their offerings and oblations, that their bounty to the evangelical priesthood exceeded, what

which are the main lawful support of the parish minister. The reason of their payment is founded on the law of God, and their settlement among us hath been by the ancient and undoubted laws of the nation §. Therefore such, as by tricks or shifts keep back or refuse to pay tithes in whole or in part, or by any other means defraud the clergy of their maintenance; are guilty of that grievous sin of sacrilege, by taking what is set apart for the clergy's subsistence, to employ it in other uses, or to their own particular profit; which is a robbing of God, as the prophet informs us: *Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, 'Wherein have we robbed thee?*

C 2

In

the tenth would have been, if they had paid it: so that there was no reason to demand tithes, when men gave a greater proportion of what they possessed; though, even during those ages there want not testimonies from the fathers of those times, that tithes were due under the gospel as well as before, and under the law: and, that they were paid, is plain from the apostolical canons, which provide for the disposal of them.

† *We have shewn upon good authority in the preceding note, that tithes were granted by the bounty and munificence of the first monarchs of this realm to the clergy, out of all the lands in the kingdom, and the perpetual payment thereof laid, as a rent-charge for the church, on the same, before any part thereof was demised to others: so here let it be also observed, that if perhaps some of the great men of the realm had then estates in absolute property; as it is certain there were very few, if any, that had; they charged the same with tithes by their own consent, before they did transmit them to the hands of the gentry, or any who now claim from them. So that the lands, being thus charged with the payment of tithes, came with this clog unto the lords and great men of this realm, and have been so transmitted and passed over from one hand to another, until they came into the possession of the present owners; who must have paid more for the purchase of them, and required larger rents from their tenants, if they had not been thus charged. And, whatever right they may have to the other nine parts, either of fee simple, lease or copy; they have certainly none at all to the tithe or tenth; which is no more theirs, than the other nine parts are the clergy's.*

In tithes and offerings, saith the Lord. So that here we are told by God himself, that the with-holding tithes is a robbing of him : and, as to what is gotten by such a robbery, the prophet declares in the next verse, *The punishment.* Ye are cursed with a curse ; because, of such sacred things, God is the true and proper owner : and accordingly we read in scripture, of severe punishments inflicted on those, who were guilty of this sin of sacrilege*.

III. A *third* thing, whereby we are to shew our honour to God, is to keep holy the *sabbath day*, and all other times set apart for his service : for, as God expects a part of our goods for the maintenance of the settled ministry in his church ; so he requires us, to honour and express our reverence towards him, by dedicating a particular part of our time to his immediate service. *Remember*, says he, *that thou keep holy the sabbath-day.*

The ends, for which the sabbath was originally instituted, and for which the command was from time to time renewed, were principally as follow : That men might continually commemorate the works of creation ; which original reason of the institution of the sabbath is of eternal and unchangeable consideration. Another reason of this commandment, is, that the poor labourer, and the servant, and even the cattle may have a time of rest : This reason likewise, as well as that of commemorating the creation, is of a moral and perpetual nature. A third reason, which was added upon occasion of renewing this institution to the Jews, was ; that they might commemorate their deliverance, out of the land of Egypt, which to that people was as it were a new creation : And, because it was a manifest contempt of this great deliverance and a presumptuously wilful despising of a plain command of God ; the man in the wilderness, who did but gather sticks upon the sabbath-day, was, by God's especial direction, commanded to be put to death : and, as the moral part of the commandment concerning the sabbath

* For further satisfaction, see the duty of the people to their ministers, Sunday 8. Sect. 4.

bath is of perpetual obligation ; so the ritual or instituted part, which had relation to the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt, is abolished by the gospel. But then, instead of the Jewish sabbath, there succeeded, by the appointment and practice of the apostles, the commemoration of our Lord's resurrection : which coming to pass upon the first day of the week the christian Lord's day was accordingly from thenceforth kept on the first day of the week, which we call *Sunday*. Therefore one day in seven must be yielded unto the Lord, and set apart for the exercise of religious duties, both in public and private.

Why changed into the Lord's day.

We must not only rest, from the works of our calling ; but our time must be employed in all such religious exercises, as tend to the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls. We must

How to be kept.

regularly frequent the worship of God in the public assemblies, from which nothing but sickness or absolute necessity should detain us : and there*, we are not to talk, or gaze about us ; but to join the prayers of the church, hear his most holy word, receive the blessed sacrament, when administered ; and contribute to the relief of the poor, if there be any collection for their support : that we may thereby openly profess ourselves christians, which is one great end of public assemblies in the service of God. We ought in private to enlarge our ordinary devotions, and

In public.

In private.

to make the subject of them chiefly to consist in thanksgivings for the works of creation and redemption ; recollecting all those mercies we have received from the bounty of heaven, through the course of our lives : to improve our knowledge, by reading and meditating upon divine subjects ; to instruct our children and families ; to visit the sick and poor, comforting them by some seasonable assistance : and, if we converse with our friends or neighbours, to season our discourse with prudent and profitable hints for the advancement of piety ; and to take care, that no founess or moroseness mingle with our serious frame of mind. In a word, it is to be spent in works of necessity, and in works of charity ; and in

* See the worship of God in his house, page 46.

whatsoever tends, without superstition and without affectation, to the real honour of God, and to the true interest and promoting of religion and virtue in the world. The extremes to be avoided, are: on the one hand, that habit of spending great part of the Lord's day in gaming, and in other loose and debauched practices; which has to numberless persons been the corruption of their principles, and the entire ruin of their morals: on the other hand, an affected judaical or pharisaical preciseness, which usually proceeds from hypocrisy, or from a want of understanding rightly the true nature of religion.

Hence we may collect the great advantages of a religious observation of the Lord's day: it keepeth up the solemn and public worship of God; which might be neglected, if left to depend upon the will of man: it preserveth the knowledge and visible profession of the christian religion in the world; when, notwithstanding the great differences there are among christians in other matters, they yet all agree in observing this day, in memory of our Saviour's resurrection: and it is highly useful, to instruct the ignorant by preaching and catechising, and to put those in mind of their duty, who in their prosperity are apt to forget God. Moreover, by spending this day in religious exercise, we acquire new strength and resolution to perform God's will in our several stations for the future.

IV. Besides this weekly day of the Lord, there are other principal times or days, set apart by the church; either in remembrance of some special mercies of God, such as the birth and resurrection of Christ, the coming down of the Holy Ghost from heaven, &c. or in memory of the blessed apostles, and other saints; who were the happy instruments, of conveying to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus, by preaching his gospel through the world, and most of them attesting the truth of it with their blood. These ought to be observed in such a manner, as may answer the ends, for which they were first appointed: that God may be glorified by an humble and grateful acknowledgment of his mercies; and that the salvation of

of our souls may be advanced, by believing the mysteries of our redemption, and imitating the examples of those primitive patterns of piety set before us. Therefore, on these days, we should be so far from looking upon them as common days, or making them instruments of vice and vanity; or spending them in luxury and debauchery, intemperance, excess, and sensuality; as the manner of some is, who look upon an *holy-day*, as designed for a loose to their passions and unbounded pleasures; that our greatest care should be, to improve our time in the knowledge and love of God, and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord; by constantly attending the public worship, and partaking of the blessed sacrament, if it be administered; and in private, by enlarging our devotions, and withdrawing ourselves (as much as possible) from the affairs of the world; particularly expressing our rejoicing by love and charity to our poor neighbour. If the holy-day be such, as is intended for our calling to mind any mystery of our redemption, or article of our faith; we ought to confirm our belief of it, by considering all those reasons, upon which it is built; that we may be able, to give a good account of the hope which is in us. We should, from our hearts, offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and resolve to perform all those duties, which arise from the belief of such an article. If we commemorate any saint, we should consider the virtues, for which he was most distinguished, and by what steps he arrived at so great perfection: and then examine ourselves, how far we are wanting in our duty; and earnestly beg God's pardon for our past failings, and his grace to enable us to conform our lives to those admirable examples, which the saints have left for our imitation.

V. As we are thus to express our thankfulness to God, for mercies received, and for the good examples set before us for our imitation; we are, with the same view of honouring God, by acts of humiliation and repentance, to keep holy those *fast-days*, set apart by the church, or by civil authority, or by our own appointment; to humble ourselves before God, in punishing our bodies, and afflicting our souls, in order to a real repentance: by

In observing the fasts of the church.

outward tokens testifying our grief for sins past, and
Thwart using them as a means to secure us from re-
manner. turning to those sins, of which we express so
 great a detestation. And this must be done,
 not only by interrupting and abridging the care of our
 bodies, but by carefully inquiring into the state of our
 souls; charging ourselves with all those transgressions,
 we have committed against God's laws; humbly confess-
 ing them, with shame and confusion of face, with hear-
 ty contrition and sorrow for them; praying, that God
 will not suffer his whole displeasure to arise, and begging
 him to turn away his anger from us: by interceding also
 with him for such spiritual and temporal blessings upon
 ourselves and others, as are needful and convenient; by
 improving our knowledge in all the particulars of our
 duty, and by relieving the wants and necessities of the
 poor, that our humiliation and prayers may find accep-
 tance with God. And, if the fast be public, we must at-
 tend the public places of God's worship: always taking
 particular care to avoid all vanity, and valuing ourselves
 upon such performances: and therefore, in our private
 fasts, we must not proclaim them to others by any out-
 ward shew; that we may not appear unto men to fast.
 We must not despise or judge our neighbour, who doth
 not, and it may be hath not the same reason to tie him-
 self up to such methods. We must not destroy the health
 of our bodies, by too great austerity; lest thereby we
 make them unfit instruments, of the improvement of our
 minds, or the discharge of our worldly employments.
 Particular care ought to be taken, that we thereby grow
 not morose and sour, peevish and fretful towards others;
 to which, severity to ourselves may be apt to incline us:
 for it is so far from expressing our repentance, that it
 makes fresh work for it by increasing our guilt. There-
 fore, when thou fastest, be not as the hypocrites are, of
 a sad countenance, &c. Wherefore,

The church of Christ having in all ages appointed so-
Of the fast leman fasts to be observed by her members up-
of Lent. on particular occasions, we still retain some
 of them; amongst which, the fast of *Lent*
 deserves our particular regard: concerning which, I
 would have you make these observations. As to the li-
 mitation

imitation of time for the keeping of this fast, the church had (I suppose) a respect to the particular space of time, wherein our Saviour fasted (which was *forty days*) as what was esteemed a proper penitential season : and, as to the intention, end, or design of this fast of Lent ; it is set apart as a proper season for mortification, and the exercise of self-denial ; to humble and afflict ourselves for our sins ; not by endeavouring to fast continually forty days, but by frequent fastings, as may be learnt from the practice of the church in all ages ; to punish our too frequent abuses of God's creatures, by abstinence, and by forbearing the lawful enjoyment of them ; to form and settle firm purposes of holy obedience ; to pray frequently to God, both in private and public, for pardon and his holy spirit ; to put us in mind of that sore trial and temptation, which Christ then endured for our sakes ; particularly to perpetuate the memory of our Saviour's sufferings ; and to make, as it were, a public confession of our belief that he died for our salvation ; and consequently, fitting ourselves to receive the tokens and pledges of his love with greater joy and gladness.

Why instituted.

For which reason, this christian institution of Lent ought to be spent in fasting, and in abstinence ; according to the circumstances of our health, and our outward condition in the world : and this with a design to deny and punish ourselves, and to express our humiliation before God for past transgressions : the ornament of attire may be laid aside ; the frequency of receiving and paying visits may be interrupted : public assemblies for pleasure and diversion should be avoided ; our retirements should be filled with reading pious discourses, and with frequent prayer, and with examining the state of our minds ; and the public devotion, and those instructing exhortations from the pulpit, which are so generally established in many churches in this season, should be constantly attended. Besides, we should be liberal in our alms ; and very ready to employ ourselves, on all opportunities of relieving either the temporal or spiritual wants of our neighbour : For the Lord says, by the prophet Isaiah ; ' Is not this the fast I have chosen, to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the

How to be observed.

‘ heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and
 ‘ that ye break every yoke? Is it not, to deal thy bread
 ‘ to the hungry; and that thou bring the poor, that are
 ‘ cast out, to thine house? when thou see’st the naked,
 ‘ that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself
 ‘ from thine own flesh?’ ch. lviii. ver. 6, 7.

SUNDAY II. PART II.

VI. *Fourthly*; We are in a more special manner to express our reverence to God, by honouring his
God must be HOLYWORD: and we honour his holy word,
honoured in by hearing, reading,* and practising, what
his word. is therein contained for our comfort and instruction.
The holy This word of God is commonly called, by
Scriptures. way of eminence, *the Holy Scriptures*: which we are obliged to search; because they contain the terms and conditions of our common salvation; without the knowledge and practice of which, we can never attain eternal happiness: I say, whatever is necessary for us to know and believe, to hope for and practise, in order to salvation, is fully contained in those
The rule of holy books. This then is the rule of our
faith. faith. Every doctrine, which is there delivered, we must believe: but, as for any doctrine, which is not plainly delivered there, and cannot clearly be deduced thence; we are not bound to believe *that*, as an article of faith, let it come ever so well recommended. Our church has therefore declared; ‘ That the holy Scripture containeth all things,
 ‘ necessary to salvation: so that, whatsoever is not
 ‘ read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to
 ‘ be required of any man; that it should be believed,
 ‘ as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. § In the name of the Holy Scripture
 ‘ we do understand those canonical books of the Old and
 ‘ New Testament, of whose authority was never any
 ‘ doubt in the church. For, the Old Testament, is not
 ‘ contrary to the New: For, both in the Old and New
 ‘ Testament,

* See the help to the reading of the Scriptures, at the End of this Book.

§ See the 6th and 7th Articles of Religion.

' Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by
' Christ; who is the only mediator between God and
' man, being both God and man:' And the things, de-
clared in scripture to be the terms and conditions of sal-
vation, are repentance from all wicked works, and faith
towards God and our Lord Jesus Christ; the belief of a
resurrection from the dead, and of a judgment to come;
and a life of virtue, or suitable obedience to our Lord's
express commands in the gospel.

These necessary things are there treated, with so much
plainness and clearness; as to be sufficiently
understood by those, who make a right use
of their reason, and read them with the re-
spect and reverence due to the oracles of God; with hu-
mility and modesty, from a sense of our own weakness
and God's perfection; and with earnest prayer, for the
divine assistance. Moreover; they, who expect to reap
benefit by reading the holy scriptures, must diligently
consider the design of the author of each book of scrip-
ture. and what is the subject he chiefly handles, with the
occasion of his writing: they must explain difficult places,
by those which are more clear; must distinguish, be-
tween literal and figurative expressions; and never have
recourse to metaphors and figures, but when somewhat
absurd arises from their being taken in a proper and lite-
ral sense: they must confine themselves, to the natural
signification of words, the usual forms of speech, and the
phrase of scripture: they must acquaint themselves, with
the common usages and customs of those times, in which
they were written, to which many expressions allude:
they must not make either side of the question in dispute,
the reason of their interpretation; for this is, to make it
a rule of interpreting scripture, not a question to be de-
cided by it. Again, they must apply general rules to par-
ticular cases; it being impossible, scripture should com-
prehend all special cases, which are infinite: And, where
there is any difficulty, nothing adds greater light, than the
consulting those primitive and faithful witnesses; who
learned the true sense of the scriptures, from the authors
themselves. Without some such means no author can be
well understood; and it is for this reason, that I would
exhort

*How to be
read.*

exhort a diligent and constant attendance, to hear this word explained and enforced in *catechising* and *preaching*. For,

First, CATECHISING is a peculiar method of teaching the ignorant, by question and answer; adapted to the meanest capacities, for their more ready instruction in the first and necessary rules or principles of our holy religion; and is of very ancient date, in the practice of the christian church. And as to the great usefulness of it, catechising hath a particular advantage, as to children; because they are subject to forgetfulness, and want of attention. Now catechising is a good remedy against both these; because, by questions put to them, children are forced to take notice of what is taught, and must give some answer to the question that is asked: and a catechism, being short, and containing in a little compass the necessary principles of religion; it is the more easily remembered. Again, the great usefulness, and indeed the necessity of it, plainly appears by experience: for, as Solomon observes, 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it:' so it very seldom happens, that children, who have not been catechised, have any clear and competent knowledge of the principles of religion ever after; and, for want of this, are incapable of receiving any great benefit from preaching, which supposes persons, to be in some measure instructed beforehand in the main principles of religion. Besides, if they have no principles of religion fixed in them, they become an easy prey to seducers.

I would therefore recommend, to parents and masters of families, this way of instructing their children and servants, : For I do not think, that this work, should lie wholly upon ministers. Ye must do your part at home; who, living always with your families, have better and more easy opportunities of fixing the principles of religion upon your children and servants. Neither must such, as have been so unfortunate as to grow in years without this instruction, imagine, they are exempt from it: for, as soon as they are able, to see their own danger and discover their own ignorance; they must apply in good earnest, to this means of obtaining the first things to be known in the

the christian religion. Therefore, whoever he be, of what age and condition soever, who finds himself ignorant of the mysteries of his religion and service of God, or in any degree feels a want of any part of necessary saving knowledge; let him (as he loves his soul, and would rescue it from eternal death) seek out for instruction, first, by the means of catechising; and then he shall profit, through God's grace, by the word preached. For,

Secondly, PREACHING is not only a publication of God's mercy, favour, blessings, grace, and promises to those, who love him and keep his com-
*In preach-
ing.*

mandments; but it is also a declaration of those threats and punishments, recorded in the word of God, against the obstinate and evil-doer. Its use is, to put us in mind of our duty, and to exhort and assist us to withstand those lusts and temptations, which set us at enmity with God. Consequently we honour God, by attending to his holy word (when it is read and preached to us) with a resolution of mind to perform, what we shall be con-
*The use of
sermons.*

vinced is our duty; with such a submission of our understanding, as is due to the oracles of God; and with a particular application of general instructions to the state of our own minds, that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God the Father, and of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore, at hearing the Word preached, we should give our attention with great reverence; and take heed, how we
*How to be
heard.*

hear; lest our negligence be interpreted, as a contempt of that authority which speaks to us: and not behave, as some do; who, at church, place their public worship, not in their hearts and knees, but in lolling, gazing, and unseemly gestures; and employ their ears (the channel, by which faith is conveyed into our souls) not to hear their duty, but to find some unreasonable fault with their teacher: For, instead of improving by the word of God, preached for their instruction; when they return home, their whole discourse turns upon the man, and not his sermon. Such hearers never want subject of complaint against the preacher; that they may, in some measure, screen their neglect of their duty to God, their neighbour, and themselves: Thus, at one time they find
 fault

fault with his memory, because too short; or with his sentences, because too long: if he be young, they despise his youth; and say, that he does but prate: if he be aged, they seldom scruple to term his zeal for their souls and his good instructions, the dictates of a man in his dotage, who knows not what he says. Again, if he preach in a plain style, suitable to weak capacities; they call him a sloven, a bad master of language: if he be solid, then he preaches flat; but, if he be not plain, then he is too witty; and, if not solid, he is certainly accused of levity, and of ridiculing the word of God: if he be unlearned, they justly say, he is not worthy of so great a calling; and, if he be endued with the qualifications of a good pastor and teacher, he is immediately proclaimed unfit for so plain and ignorant a people. In fine, when the sermon must be confessed to be very excellent, then they say, he preaches for gain; and if it be but ordinary, they cry, they can read as good at home. But now,

What can be thought, to be the end of such men?

The danger of some hearers. God may justly give them up, to a reprobate mind; and withdraw that grace, which they have abused: and then, it is no wonder,

they turn the most serious things into ridicule; and hear the terrors of the Lord without the least sense of their own guilt. God grant, this be not the case of many; who stay from church, under a pretence that they cannot benefit under such and such a minister! And let not those, who constantly attend on stated days, to hear God's word preached, and yet continue in their habitual sins; let them not think, they have honoured God!

The end of hearing a good sermon. No. The way, to reverence God by honouring his word, is not to imagine, that, when we have been affected with a sermon,

the great end of hearing is fulfilled; for we must apply those good instructions and exhortations, in such a manner, as to enable us to conquer our most secret sins. Sins are the distempers of the soul; and God has prescribed this, as a means of its cure. Therefore, as no patient can hope for the cure of his bodily infirmities, by talking with, or only looking upon, the physician, and his prescriptions and medicines: so neither can any man hope,

Sund. 2.] *Honour due to God in his Sacraments.* 63

to be released from his sins; if he never apply God's word, to enable him to eschew evil and to do good. The main matter then of hearing a sermon, is the putting useful instructions into practice; for, when God enlightens our minds, it is our business to walk as children of light: We must never despair of conquering our evil habits, nor be discouraged in prosecuting the convictions of our own consciences; for a strong resolution, with the assistance of God's grace, will overcome great difficulties. Let us therefore never measure our godliness, by the number of sermons, at which we are present; as if that outward mark of reverence to God were any sure mark of a good christian: But let us estimate our obedience to God, and the reformation of our manners, by the quantity of the good fruit, which the dew of God's grace, through the ministration of the word, has enabled us to bring forth; without which disposition of heart, all our hearing will only draw the heavier judgments of God upon us: because we hear and know our master's will, and do it not.

VII. *Fifthly*, The grand mark of a christian's duty to God, is the honouring him in his SACRAMENTS of *Baptism* and the *Lord's-supper*; which are, 'outward visible signs, of inward and spiritual grace given unto us; 'ordained by Christ himself, as a means

Honour due to God in his sacraments.

'whereby we receive the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof. In which description, we are taught; that, to constitute a sacrament, these things are required; *First*, some visible sign of it, apparent to our senses; *Secondly*, that this sign represent some spiritual grace and favour, vouchsafed us by God; *Thirdly*, that it be of Christ's own institution; and, *Fourthly*, that it be appointed by him, as the means of conveying to us this inward grace, and as a seal and token of assurance, that he will bestow the one upon those, who do worthily receive the other.*

A sacrament, what it is.

And we are not to doubt, but that, in the right use of the outward signs of water, bread and wine, he will, (by the power of his spirit, though in a manner unknown,

* See the 25th Article of Religion.

unknown, because not necessary to be revealed to us) convey and confirm, in Baptism and in the Lord's-supper, to the worthy receivers thereof, the divine grace signified, according to his own most true promise and engagements. We must therefore consider both these sacraments, under those particular properties: And, *first*, concerning Baptism.

By the sacrament of Baptism, we are initiated into the profession of christianity, and admitted to the terms of the christian covenant. I say BAPTISM delivers us, from the vengeance of God; by cleansing us, from the guilt and power of sin; by taking us, into a covenant of grace and favour with God; and by infusing a principle of new life into our souls, to enable us to live according to God's laws, and to attain that everlasting happiness, which is the free gift of God in Christ*: Or, (as our church-office explains it) 'Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and be made like unto him; that, as he died and rose again for us, so should we (who are baptized) die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness; continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.' Nevertheless we must not dare to take upon us, to exclude any from all hopes of God's mercy, in extraordinary cases; such as the want of opportunity, or capacity of receiving it. We have no warrant, to pronounce positively of their salvation; because the promises of salvation, as the gospel declares them to us (and we have no promises of salvation, but in the gospel) are only made to those, who believe in Jesus Christ, and enter into his covenant by baptism: On the other side; to pronounce of their damnation, seems very harsh and uncharitable; neither do I know, that any are (in the scripture) threatened with damnation, but such as reject the gospel, after it is preached to them; or dishonour their profession, after they have embraced it, by a wicked unholiness of life: neither of which can be said, of those we are

*The case of
unbaptized
persons.*

now

* See the 27th Article of Religion.

now speaking of. We ought therefore to leave them, to the uncovenanted mercies of God, if I may so speak : For, of this we are certain, That the Judge of all the earth will do right ; nor will he demand the tale of bricks, where he hath allowed no straw to make them. But, as the Jews were obliged, under the severest penalty, to be circumcised and keep the passover ; so our guilt and danger will be proportionably great, by not receiving baptism, when it is in our power ; it being of the highest authority, and the distinguishing badge, as well as admission into our most excellent profession. And, since we are the offspring of Adam, and consequently subject to death by his fall ; how can we be made partakers of that redemption, which Christ hath purchased for the children of God ; if we do not enjoy the advantage of that method, which alone is appointed by Christ for us, to become members of God's kingdom ? For, Jesus himself hath assured us ; that, ' Except a man be born of water ' and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of ' God.' It was therefore the constant custom of the primitive church, to administer baptism to infants for the remission of sins ; by and under certain conditions, vows, or obligations, to which they were to consent, and according to which they were to endeavour to regulate their conduct through this world in their way to heaven : And this practice was esteemed to be derived, by the best tradition, from the Apostles themselves ; and is therefore still retained and enjoined by our church : which obliges all persons coming to be baptized, either by themselves or sureties, to promise and vow, ' That they will renounce the devil ' and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh ; to believe all the articles of the christian faith ; and to keep ' God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the ' same all the days of their life.'

*Its vows,
to renounce.*

By the *devil*, we mean all the fallen angels ; one of which is chief, prince, or head ; that great enemy of Christ and his church ; who, having seduced our first parents, hath ever since had, through God's permission, a great power in the world ; and still seeketh our destruction, by tempting us to sin,
and

The devil.

and then accusing us to God for it. The *works* of the devil are all wickednesses and vices ; but in *His works.* particular, all idolatry, witchcraft, fortune-telling and dependence on the creatures : and especially the crimes, of which the devil is principally guilty, and to which he tempteth men ; such as pride, envy, murder, in fact or in the heart ; lying, deceiving, and misleading, especially in matters of religion. And, when we renounce the devil and all his works, we reject and withstand that usurped power and dominion, which he exercises in the world ; we resist his personal temptations, and engage to be in no kind partakers of his crimes, as we would not share in his punishment.

By renouncing the *pomps* and *vanities* of this wicked world, we are to understand, not that the *The world.* world (which God hath created) or any of its natural enjoyments, are evil ; but that the things, to be renounced, are the evil customs of the world ; the vicious fashions and corrupt practices, which prevail in it ; all methods of ambition and grandeur, inconsistent with integrity and virtue ; and all such sorts of diversions and entertainments, as plainly tend to corrupt good manners : and by the vanities of the world, we are to understand, riches unjustly gotten, or vainly and profusely squandered away in riotous living, or pursued with insatiable covetousness ; which leads men into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. Thus christians absolutely renounce the yielding themselves up to all excess, either in diet, sports, or apparel ; and their setting their hearts, upon wealth or greatness of the world, or on those customs and practices of worldly men, which are in themselves sinful : and they so far renounce the honours and riches of the world, as not to be ambitious of the former, nor covetous of the latter ; and, in general, do hereby look upon themselves to be debarred from having more to do, than what is necessary, with any thing in the world ; which may be like to prove an occasion of sin to them, or may probably tend to turn them from God, and draw off their minds from the other world.

As to the sinful lusts of the *Flesh*; they are thus reckoned up; 'Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, *The flesh.*
'hatred and variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like:' and consequently, to renounce all the sinful lusts of the flesh, is to avoid adultery and fornication, rioting and drunkenness, and all that filthiness of the flesh and spirit, which is inconsistent with christian purity, and will render us unclean in God's sight. Finally, christians in their baptism absolutely renounce all desires whatsoever, which fasten upon any forbidden, and therefore unlawful, objects; so as never to give any indulgence or consent to them; much less to follow, or be led by them, to the commission of any sinful act.

By the ARTICLES of the *christian faith*, we are to understand all those doctrines of religion, for which we have the authority of Christ and his Apostles: the fundamental points whereof *To believe the christi- an faith.*
are summed up, in that form of sound words; which, because it contains the heads of the Doctrine preached by the Apostles, and was compiled (for the most part) in or near their times, is called the *Apostles Creed.* To this we are not only to assent, but we are also strictly obliged, by our baptismal vow, to learn it, both as to the words and meaning of them: For, the nature of that faith, which we are to give to the articles of our creed, is such an assent, as must be sincerely from the heart; according to that saying in the viiith chapter of Acts; 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized:' It must be active; must work by love, and be stedfast without wavering; not only believing the great benefits and promises of God to mankind, but gratefully accepting of the same, by a dutiful obedience and resignation to God through Christ; without this, it will little avail us to believe all the articles of the christian faith.

By the promise to keep God's holy will and commandments, we are bound by vow to yield him an universal obedience: and to keep (as long as we live) our good resolutions, not to break, but to keep, the ten commandments.

ments of the moral law : for baptism, and faith, and resolutions of obedience, are nothing ; unless they produce the real fruits, of a virtuous and good life. ‘ The just shall live by faith ; but, if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.’ The meaning of which is ; not, that men, in this frail and mortal state, can continue without sin ; but, that they must press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, constantly endeavouring to keep all God’s commandments : under which are included, all the particular precepts of the Old and New Testaments, which are reducible to one or other of those heads, ; for (as Jesus himself observes) ‘ On these commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’ No one sin must reign in us : the only true religion is, to do whatever God commands ; and that, because he (from whom we have received all that we have, and to whom we owe all that we can do) commands it : all other schemes open a door to confusion and licentiousness. We must either follow God’s will, and be determined by it ; or we must set up our own head-strong self-will, in opposition to his unerring wisdom. How much then do they derogate from the honour of God, who represent religion as an unprofitable and unpleasant task ; when it is plain to any man, who considers things rightly, and is not under the prejudice of his lusts and passions, that the great design of religion is to make us happy here as well as hereafter, and that all its rules and precepts are most admirably suited to this end ? There is nothing in religion, but what tends to make our lives easy, chearful, and contented ; nothing, but what is suitable to our natures, and agreeable to the dictates of right reason ; nothing, but what will ennoble our minds, enlarge our understandings, and inspire us with a generous principle of universal love, and charity, and good will to mankind ; in short, the commands of God are not grievous, but his yoke is easy, and his burthen light.

Thus have I shewn you the nature of your vows in baptism. And now I must inform you, that, *The obligation of these vows.* except a christian (when arrived at years of understanding) believe and do, as promised by his sureties in baptism, he will certainly forfeit

forfeit all the benefits thereof: which are, the gracious promises of pardon and forgiveness of sin, upon our true repentance; the assistance of God's blessed spirit and the influences of his grace, to enable us to work our salvation; the benefit of Christ's intercession in heaven, where he is an advocate for us with the Father; a share, in all those promises of care and protection, made to the church; and an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled; a crown of glory, which fadeth not away. The benefits promised by God in baptism are, that part of God's covenant with man; which we have no reason to hope we shall obtain, till we comply with our promises made to him in that sacrament; which, by God's help, we are always able to do, for God can never be supposed, to command or require more of us, than what he enables us to perform: and therefore, both in justice and in regard of our own interest, we are bound to stand to this covenant, which was made in our name by our godfathers and godmothers; because they promised no more, than what is implied in the very nature of baptism. All mankind are in the hands of God's unlimited goodness; yet his covenanted mercies are the peculiar lot and portion of christians, the members of Christ's holy church; who honour God, by a due discharge of those things promised in baptism; as to which promises, ye have already been taught, what that first vow obliges you to renounce; namely, the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. And therefore, let us now proceed to enquire, what that faith is; to which we give our assent, when we profess to believe all the articles of the christian faith: of all which articles we shall treat, after I have laid down some instructions concerning divine revelation, and given some convincing reasons for its certainty.

SUNDAY III.

I. *Of divine Revelation ; its difficulties, evidences, and excellency.* II. *Of faith in one God.* III. *The Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.* IV. *Of God's providence ; and of chance, Fortune, necessity, and fate.* V. *Of the Trinity, or Three Persons in the Godhead ; why difficult to be believed.* VI. *Of faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord. An objection against this faith, answered.* VII. *Of the angel's message to the virgin Mary ; and VIII. of the incarnation and birth of Christ.*

I. **C**ONCERNING a divine REVELATION, the proofs are three : *first*, they may relate to the person inspired ; *secondly*, to those, who received from the persons inspired the matter revealed ; *thirdly*, to those, who live remote from the age of the inspired persons ; as is the case of all christians, since the time of Christ and the apostles his successors. For, if the Almighty vouchsafe to make a revelation, or manifest and discover any truth or thing to a man, of which he was before ignorant ; it is very reasonable to think, that he will satisfy the person concerning the reality of it ; for it cannot signify any thing, or have any effect upon the man, unless he be satisfied it is such.

The assurance of a divine revelation, as to the person himself, is most probably wrought by the great evidence it carries of its divine original. In God's manifesting himself to the prophets, there was such a powerful representation, on the part of the messenger of God's will ; such clearness of perception, on the part of the person inspired, or to whom he was sent ; as abundantly made good those phrases of *vision* and *voice*, by which it is described in scripture : and sometimes there was added some sign or supernatural proof ; as in the case of *Gideon** and *Moses* †. By which examples you may perceive, why

* *Judg vi. 21. and vii. 13. to 15.* † *Exod. iv. 3. 6. 7.*

why a good man has that certainty, which the deluded person wants; because a good man (when he is inspired, and reflects upon it; and diligently considers the assurance which he finds in his mind) can give a rational account of it to himself, which the deluded person cannot have; whose positiveness often ariseth from pride and self-conceit, which have no small influence; but more especially from a disordered imagination or fancy, which interrupts the operations of the mind: whereas a real inspiration will bear the test of the prophet's reason, and the people's examination.

Again; the truth of such a revelation may be judged of, from the reasons, why we ought to believe the persons pretending to inspirations; *Its outward evidences.* whose known probity and approved integrity clear them, from all suspicion of imposture; and whose prudence and understanding set them above being deceived: also from the extraordinary evidence and testimony of miracles, and the prediction of future events; and, above all, from the matter of the revelation: this, when it concerns mankind in general, must be worthy of God, as proceeding from him; and must tend to the advantage, the satisfaction, and happiness of mankind, to whom the revelation is made: for justice, holiness, and goodness are as necessary, and as essential, to our thoughts of God, as power; and consequently a revelation, which contradicts these attributes, cannot come from the Father of truth.

The necessity and reasonableness of the evidence shews it, to be a proof of the highest nature: for, being such, as every man, who is master of sense and reason, can judge of; *Are sufficient to convince.* it is, what every man ought to be determined by. For (as in all other things which have been done at a great distance of time) the evidence, necessary to satisfy us of the truth of a revelation, and to oblige us to believe it to be sent from God by divers persons and in divers manners; is the credible report of eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses, concerning the miracles which have been wrought, and the predictions which have been foretold, to prove persons inspired; conveyed down to us, in such a manner and with such evidence,

dence, that we have no reason to doubt the truth of them. But there is, besides, an inward evidence of the christian revelation, which confirms the outward evidence given of it : for, as it exceeds all other forms of religion, that ever appeared in the world ; so it is every way worthy of God, entirely beneficial to his creatures, and agreeable to the best reason and sense of human nature.

The scripture, though deep, is clear enough in every doctrine, which tends to the glory of God, the good of mankind, and the benefit of our souls : So far God has gone (and farther, than this, he needed not go) to answer the end of a revelation. Whatever things in it are difficult to be understood, which a moderate application cannot clear up ; they may exercise the abilities of the curious, but are not necessary to edify the bulk of mankind. Any man, who diligently and impartially searches the scriptures, comparing place to place, interpreting the darker passages by the clearer, and attending to the scope and design of the author ; may furnish himself with an intelligible, consistent, and determinate rule of faith and practice ; may thence derive full hopes of a blessed immortality ; and there find that beautiful assemblage of moral truths, clear and unmixed, which lie scattered through the writings of all the philosophers, and are in them blended with pernicious errors. Whereas other writers took things, in too high a key ; and were proud to soar, above the level of common apprehensions : the inspired writers stoop to the lowest capacities ; at the same time, that they enlighten the highest. Whatever precept is briefly and in general terms delivered in one place, is more clearly and distinctly unfolded in another : And, where there is the addition of any doctrine, which natural reason could not discover ; it is so far from contradicting the plain and evident sense of mankind, that, upon consideration, it appears highly useful to us in the state in which we now are : For, the great fears and doubts of mankind, concerning the way of appeasing the offended justice of God, are removed ; and for the dishonour, done his justice and holiness, satisfaction has been made by the death of Christ. A man may look into his bible, and there plainly see, what will become

become of him, when the present scene is shifted, as to his most important, and (I had almost said) his only concern, a future state: whereas, were he left to himself, the more he considered the point on every side, the more he would find himself bewildered in doubts without coming to any determination. Happy are we, if we know our happiness, who have a revelation, like its great author, full of grace and truth!

The *Christian Religion* proposes a reward, excellent in itself, lasting in its duration, and clearly and plainly revealed. The precepts, laid down for the direction of our lives, comprehend all sorts of virtue, which relate either to God, or to our neighbour, or to ourselves; they have cleared, what was doubtful by the light of nature; and have made the improvements of it, necessary parts of our duty. It supplies us with powerful assistance, for the performance of our obedience; light for our dark minds, strength for our weak resolutions, and courage under all our difficulties; and above all, sets before us an exact and perfect pattern, for our instruction and encouragement. So that the christian revelation in itself, as well as the external evidence, proves its original to be from God. Consider then the great guilt of those, who reject the christian revelation: for, they resist the utmost evidence, which any religion is capable of receiving, both from its inward value, and from that outward attestation, which God hath been pleased to give it by miracles and prophecies; and consequently, by this act of theirs, they condemn themselves, because they reject the only means of their salvation, though it be supported by all the faith of history and uninterrupted records; which is all the evidence in such circumstances, that can be presumed necessary, or can possibly be had: which is, therefore, sufficient to inspire us, with the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; with a thankful remembrance of all things, which they have done and promised to us; and with an abhorrence of all, that from scripture shall appear to be displeasing to the Almighty.

*Through
Christ.*

*It demands
our belief.*

II. When, in the *first* ARTICLE of our *Creed*, we profess a belief in *one God the Father Almighty, maker of hea-*

ven and earth; we not only declare, that we acknowledge
The christi- him to be the Lord, and that he has revealed
an faith in his will to us to guide us in the way of truth;
one God. but that he has reserved some things to him-
 self, of which (as they regard not the crea-

ture) he hath made no revelation: such as these: how
 there can be three persons in one God; how the divine
 and human nature could be united in one person, Christ
 Jesus; or how a Virgin could conceive and bear a son,
 without the knowledge of a man. Therefore, when we
 say, *I believe in one God*; let it not be such a belief only,
 as the heathens have, or those who only follow the dic-
 tates of nature; who, from the things which are seen,
 collect the eternal power and godhead; but it must be
 that christian faith, which believes, there are three distinct

The Father. persons in one God; *Father, Son and Holy*
Ghost; who is the *one* only living and true
 God; existing of himself, by the necessity of his own na-
 ture: absolutely independant, eternal, omnipresent, un-
 changeable, incorruptible; without body, parts or pas-
 sions; of infinite power, knowledge, and wisdom; of per-
 fect liberty, and freedom of will; of infinite goodness,
 justice, and truth; and all other possible perfections, so
 as to be absolutely self-sufficient to his own infinite and
 unalterable happiness. And if so, it will certainly fol-

The Son. low; that this same, supreme, self-existent
 Cause, and Father of all things, did, before
 all ages, in an incomprehensible manner, by his almighty
 power and will, beget or produce a divine person, styled
 the *Word*, or *Wisdom*, or *Son of God*; begotten not made;
 God of God, in whom dwells the fulness of divine per-
 fections; the image of the invisible God, the brightness
 of his Father's Glory, and the express image of his per-
 son; having been in the beginning with God, partaker
 with him of his glory, before the world was; the uphol-
 der of all things, by the word of his power; and himself
 over all, God blessed for ever. In like manner, what

The Holy has been said of the Son, may, with little
Ghost. variation, be (very agreeably to right reason)
 understood concerning the original proces-
 sion, or manner of derivation, of the *Holy Ghost* from the
 Father and the Son.

Sund. 3.] *Of the Christian Faith in one God.* 75

As we believe God to be *One* ; so we believe him to be, in such a manner one, that there cannot possibly be another : for, all other things must derive their being from him ; and whatsoever being has its existence from another, cannot be God, but must be a creature. This unity of God is of universal obligation, to be believed ; that we may be fixed, as to the object of our worship ; and place our religious adoration there only, where it is due ; and also, that we may give him that honour, which is due to him alone : part whereof is, that we have none other Gods but one ; for this is the ground of all religion : him only should we serve, because he only is God ; in him only should we trust, because he only is our rock ; to him only should we direct our devotions, because he only knows the hearts of the children of men ; him we should love with all our heart, because he only has infinite goodness, mercy, beauty, glory, and excellency.

III. The same reason which demands our believing one God, obliges us to believe that one God to be *the Father* : for, unto us there is but one God ; the Father, by creation : as also, in regard to our preservation ; as a man is said to be the father of him, whom he educates. God is likewise the Father, in respect of redemption, from a state of misery to a happy condition ; for he is the true Father, whose word it is ; even the Father of lights, who of his own will begat us with the word of truth : Thus, whosoever believes, that Jesus is the Christ ; he is born of God, is God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works. Finally, God is the Father, in respect of adoption : thus it is said, ' that he hath predestinated us, to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself ; and that we receive the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.' Yet there is still a higher and more proper notion of God's paternity, in that he is the Father of Christ ; by whom he is sometimes called *the Father*. sometimes *my*, sometimes *your*, but never *our* Father, Christ is the beloved, the first-born, the only-begotten ; God's own Son : and we are the children of God by Christ Jesus.

The perpetual obligation on us to believe that God is our Father, appears, in that it is the ground of our filial

love, fear, honour, and obedience : It gives life to our devotions, and assurance to our petitions ; both these, in obedience to our Saviour's commands, being directed to God, as our father : it sweetens our afflictions and his fatherly corrections : and the assurances of his love and pity to us infer the necessity, of our endeavouring to imitate him ; to be holy, as he is holy ; merciful, as he is merciful ; and perfect, as he is perfect.

When we say, he is *Almighty*, we profess God's authority ; absolute, first in respect of making whatsoever pleaseth him, in such manner as best pleaseth him ; secondly, in respect of possessing and governing all things, so made by him ; which right is independant, as being received from none, and is the sole fountain of all such right in any other : Again, we profess it to be infinite, in respect of the object, as extending to all things in heaven and earth ; and in respect of the fulness of it, as being supreme, far above what the potter hath over his clay ; and also in respect of its continuance, as being all-powerful and eternal. This dominion we should so believe, as to work in us an awful reverence of his majesty, and an entire subjection to his will ; to breed in-us, patience under our sufferings ; and to make us thankful, for his mercies received ; knowing they might justly have been denied us, as we have no right to claim them (as a debt) from our Creator.

The whole world, both the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein, were created and made by the same God ; and this, through the operation of his Son, that divine Word, or wisdom of the Father ; by whom (the scripture says)

The creation of the world.

God made the world, and all things, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ; whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers : All things were created, by him, and for him ; he is before all things, by him all things consist ; and without him was not any thing made, that was made. All this is very agreeable to sound and unprejudiced reason : For, that neither the whole, nor any part of the world ; neither the form, nor motion, nor matter of it, could exist of itself, by any necessity in its own nature, can be sufficiently proved, from undeniable principles of reason. Consequently,

ly, both the whole world, and all the variety of things which now exist therein, must of necessity have received, both their being itself, and also their form and manner of being, from God, the alone supreme and self-existent cause; and must needs depend upon his good pleasure every moment, for the continuance and preservation of that being; and accordingly, the learned of all ages have unanimously agreed, that the world evidently owes, both its being and preservation, to God.

IV. This all-wise and almighty Creator; who made all things by the word of his power, and upholds and preserves them by his continual help; does also, by his all wise *providence*, *God's providence.* perpetually govern and direct the issues and events of all things; takes care of this lower world, and of all (even the smallest things) which are therein; disposes things in a regular order and succession, in every age, from the beginning to the end of the world; and inspects, with a more particular and special regard, the moral actions of men. But we must not expect, that God will interpose his particular providence, where our own endeavours are sufficient; for, that would be to encourage sloth and idleness, instead of countenancing and supporting virtue: Neither ought we to expect, to be relieved from difficulties and distresses, into which our own mismanagement and criminal conduct have plunged us. But when, without any fault of ours, affairs become so perplexed and entangled, that human assistance will be of no avail; then we must have recourse to God, that he may give us wisdom, to conduct us through all the labyrinths and intricacies of life; resolution, to grapple with difficulties; and strength, to overcome them. This, as it is far more expressly, clearly, and constantly, taught in scripture, than any of the writings of the most learned men; so it is also highly agreeable to right and true reason: For, that a Being, which is always present and infinitely wise, cannot but know every thing which is done in every part of the world, and with equal ease take notice of the very least things as of the greatest; that an infinitely powerful Being must needs govern and direct every thing in such manner, and to such ends, as he knows to be best and fittest in the whole, so far as is consistent with that liberty

of will, which he has given to all rational creatures ; and that an infinitely just and good governor cannot but take more particular and exact notice of the moral actions of all mankind, and how far they are conformable or not conformable to the rules he has set them ; all this (I say) is most evidently agreeable to sound reason. What therefore the vanity of science, falsely so called, has ascribed to nature, or to second causes, exclusively of the first ; and what men vulgarly call Chance or unforeseen accident, is in scripture resolved into the immediate will and providence of God. Thus, when a person is slain by chance or accident, as men vulgarly speak ; the scripture more accurately expresses it, by saying, ‘ God *delivered* ‘ such an one *into the hand* of those, who slew him without design :’ Exod. xxi. 13. And, in all other instances, the same notion is every where kept up in scripture : neither is it merely in a pious manner of expression, that the scripture ascribes every event to the providence of God ; but it is strictly and philosophically true in nature and reason, that there is no such thing as chance or accident : it being evident, that those words do not signify any thing really existing, nor any thing truly an agent or the cause of an event ; but merely shew men’s ignorance of the real and immediate cause. This is so true that many (even of those, who have no religion, nor any sense at all of the providence of God) do yet know very well, by the light of their own natural reason, that there neither is nor can be any such thing as *chance* ; that is, no such thing, as an effect without a cause : and therefore, what others ascribe to chance, they ascribe to the operation of *necessity* or *fate*. But in reality *fate* itself also is as truly nothing, as chance is : Nor is there, in nature, any other proper cause of any event, but the free will of rational and intelligent creatures, acting within the sphere of their limited faculties ; and the supreme power of God, directing, by his omnipresent providence, the inanimate motions of the whole material and unintelligent world. This is the truest philosophy, as well as the best divinity. For, what is *nature* ? Is it an understanding Being, or is it not ? If it be not, how can an undesigning Being produce plain notices of contrivance and design ? If it be an understanding Being, which acts throughout the universe ;

Sund. 3.] *Of three Persons in the Godhead.* 79

verse; then it is that great Being, which we call God. For *nature*, *necessity* and *chance* (being mere phantoms, which have no reason, wisdom, or power) cannot act, with the utmost exactness of wisdom, powerfully, incessantly, and every where.

V. We believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be *three distinct persons* in the divine nature; because the holy scriptures in several places distinguish them from one another, as we use in common speech to distinguish three several persons. This is recorded, in the form of administering the sacrament of baptism; which is, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:' and in the solemn blessing, with which St. Paul concludes his second epistle to the Corinthians; 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost:' and also the three witnesses in heaven (the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost) prove, that each of these persons is God. Besides, the names, properties, and operations of God, are attributed to each of them in holy writ. That the names, properties, and operations of God, are attributed to the Second Person in the blessed Trinity, the Son; is plain from St. John: 'The Word was God.' St. Paul says, 'that God was manifested in the flesh; that Christ is over all, God blessed for ever; and that the Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, and is a discern-er of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Eternity is attributed to him; 'the Son hath life in himself: he is the same, and his years shall not fail.' Perfection of knowledge; 'as the Father knoweth Me, so know I the Father:' the creation of all things; 'all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made.' We are commanded, to honour the Son, as we honour the Father; and the glorified saints sing their hallelujahs, as to God the Father, so also to the Lamb for ever and ever.

We ascribe also the names, properties, and operations of God, to the Third Person in the blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost: for, lying to the Holy Ghost, is called lying to God; and, because christians are the Temples of

Three persons in the Godhead.

the Holy Ghost, they are said to be the Temples of God. His teaching all things, his guiding into all truth; his telling things to come; his searching all things, even the deep things of God; his being called the spirit of the Lord, in opposition to the spirit of man; are plain characters of his divinity: besides, in baptism and the apostolical blessing, he (as an object of faith and worship) is joined with God the Father, who will not impart his glory to another; and the blasphemy, committed against him is said to be forgiven, neither in this world, nor the world to come.

These plain texts shew, that we are obliged to believe the doctrine of the holy Trinity: and our church affirms; 'There is but one living and true God, everlasting; without body, parts or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible: and, in the unity of this Godhead, there be three persons; of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' * Which doctrine of

Why it must be believed the Trinity, though it be above reason, in that we cannot comprehend the manner of it; is not, however, contrary to reason:

neither does it imply a contradiction, to say, 'the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God:' and yet, there are not three Gods, but one God; because we do not affirm, they are one and three, in the same respect. The divine Being is that alone, which makes God: That can be but one; and therefore, there can be no more Gods, than one. But, because the scriptures, which assure us of the unity of the divine Being, do likewise with the Father join the Son and Holy Ghost, in the same attributes, operations, and worship, as proved above: therefore, they are capable of number, as to their relation to each other; but not as to their Being, which is but one. Consequ-

Why difficult to be believed. quently, the difficulty, which some men pretend they find in the belief of a Trinity, is the effect of their own presumption and ignorance; who pretend to dive into the se-

* See the first Article of Religion.

Sund. 3.] *Of three Persons in the Godhead.* 81

secret things of God, by the weakness of human capacity; and, because they cannot unfold the depths of divine wisdom, charge God foolishly with contradiction. The truth of the case is this: our prospect is bounded by a very narrow horizon, our faculties limited within a very narrow sphere of activity; and (whatever absurdities some people may alledge, without being able to prove, against the Trinity) the greatest absurdity of all is, that weak ignorant creatures should pretend to fathom an infinite subject with a very scanty line. Want of humility, in points of so high a nature, is always, in some degree, want of sense: There may be a bright and sparkling imagination; but there can be no such thing, as a well poised judgment and sound sober sense, without humility. Let us then proceed, in our researches after truth, with all due humility and modesty; and not stand upon terms, with our maker; nor lose the humble and meek christian, in the vain disputer of this world: For however valuable a clear discernment, and an uncommon reach of thought, may be; yet humility, which does not exercise itself in matters which are too high, is undoubtedly far more amiable in the sight of that Being; who, though he inhabit eternity, yet dwelleth with the lowly and contrite. We then give the best proofs of the strength of our reason, when we own the weakness of it, in the deep things of God; humbly content, to see him through a glass darkly, till we can see him as he is, face to face.

This should teach us, to submit our reason to the obedience of faith; to believe this mystery, which we are sufficiently assured God hath revealed, though we cannot comprehend it; to contain ourselves within the bounds of sobriety, without wading too far into abstruse, curious, and
How to be enquired into.
useless enquiries; to admire and adore the most glorious Trinity, as being the joint authors of our salvation; to acknowledge the extreme love of God towards us, in giving his only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity; to die for us sinners; and the wonderful condescension of our dear Redeemer, the merits of whose sufferings were made of more value by the dignity and excellence of his person; and never to

grieve that eternal Spirit, by whose gracious help we are made partakers of life everlasting. The least grain of sand is able to baffle the finest understanding : and yet we would pretend to sound the depths of the divine nature and counsels ; never considering, what has been often observed ; that, ‘ if what was revealed concerning God, ‘ were always adapted to our comprehension ; it could not ‘ with any fitness represent that nature, which we allow ‘ to be incomprehensible.’ We need not ransack the scriptures for difficulties : every thing, about us and with us, above us and beneath us, convinces us, that we are very ignorant ; and, if once we come to a resolution to quit what is clear (such, as the proofs for christianity) upon the account of what is obscure, we shall run into universal scepticism.

Observe here, in answer to a very popular argument against christianity ; That, to believe such doctrines of christianity as we cannot comprehend, does not destroy the use of reason in religion : for, nothing can be a greater reflection upon religion, than to say, it is unreasonable ; that it contradicts that natural light, which God hath fixed in our minds ; and that it declines a fair and impartial trial, and will not bear the test of a thorough examination. God enlightened man with reason, to discover the grounds of natural religion, and inculcate the wisdom and prudence of acting according to them : Reason shews the conveniency of things to our natures, and their tendency to our interest and happiness ; since, as we are thereby convinced, that piety towards God, that justice, gratitude, and mercy towards men, are agreeable to our natures ; so reason discovers to us, that these duties are good, because they bring benefit and advantage to us : And, this reason is the faculty, whereby the evidence and proof of revealed religion is to be tried. The proper exercise of reason, in a christian, is, to examine and inquire, whether what is proposed and required to be believed, be revealed by God ; whether it come with the true marks of his authority, and really have him for its author : for, our acceptance of any thing, as revealed by God, must be grounded upon evidence that it comes from him : when we are, by proper arguments, convinced

ed of the divine authority of the revelation ; reason assists us in discerning the true and genuine sense of such a revelation, and helps us to apply general rules contained, in it to all manner of special cases whatsoever : and when we are satisfied, that a doctrine is revealed by God, though it be above the reach of our understanding ; yet we have the strongest and most cogent reason in the world to believe it ; because God is infinitely wise and all-knowing, and therefore cannot be deceived ; and being infinitely good, we may be sure he will not deceive us. Thus are we conducted to the knowledge of that faith, and that peace, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord : for ‘ this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent.’

SUNDAY III. PART II.

VI We profess, in the *second* ARTICLE of our christian Faith ; that we *believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son our Lord* ; because, as we believe in God, so we must also believe in Christ : for, this is his commandment ; that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, who shall save his people from their sins. Therefore, to believe in *Jesus Christ our Lord*, imports, not only to be fully persuaded, that he is that eternal Son of God, whom he declared himself to be ; and that he is the true Messiah, and Saviour of the world : but it farther includes our obligation and consent, to obey all his commandments, who is our Lord and our King ; and to put our whole trust in him alone, for our obtaining eternal life, and all other intermediate blessings, only by his mediation for us with his Father. Therefore (says the Apostle) ‘ there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ So that we are absolutely obliged, to believe this part of the christian faith ; because we cannot be saved by Christ, but by believing in him.

*Of faith
in Jesus
Christ.*

When we give the title of *the Christ*, or Messiah, unto Jesus our Saviour ; then we profess to believe, that Jesus is the person consecrated of God, by the most sacred anointing, to that high office of saving mankind : like which were the offices.

*Who is the
Christ.*

offices of King, priest, and prophet, under the law (in the setting of whom apart to their proper offices, the anointing oil was used) as types and shadows of the Saviour of all Mankind. Wherefore the prophet

A prophet. Isaiah, foreseeing this coming of the Son of God for our redemption, cries out, in the person of the prophet Jesus; 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, be-

A Priest. 'cause he hath anointed me to preach the 'gospel to the poor:' And that Jesus was anointed to the *Sacerdotal* office, appears from that of the 'Psalmist; 'The Lord sware, and will not repent; 'Thou art a *Priest* for ever, after the order of *Melchisedeck.*' It also appears, that Jesus was to be anointed

A King. to the *regal* office, from the most antient tradition of the Jews, and predictions of the prophets: and to this he was solemnly set apart, when God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in heavenly places, far above all principality,

In what manner. might, dominion, and power. He exerciseth this office, by delivering to his people a law, and by his grace enableth them to walk in it; by preserving them from temptations, and by supporting and delivering them under afflictions: and he will at last complete all, by rewarding them in a most royal manner; making them, kings and priests unto God and his Father. Wherefore,

If we believe him to be our *Prophet*, we should be induced thereby to hear and receive and observe his word; as being delivered by him, whom God himself hath declared to be his beloved Son, and hath commanded us to

The influence of this belief.

hear. Our belief in him, as our *Priest*, should add confidence to that obedience; and give us boldness, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; and, having a high-priest, over the house of God, to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith; to consider ourselves, as bought with a price, and no longer our own, but bound to live only to him who died for us. Our belief in him, as our *King*, should induce us to be his faithful subjects, and to honour him by a cheerful and ready obedience to his laws; and we may always remember, that this is part of the seal of the foundation

of God : that every one, who nameth the name of Christ shall depart from iniquity.

When we acknowledge Christ to be *our Lord* ; it is, not only in respect of his general dominion over all things ; but more peculiarly, as having by his death conquered him, to whom we had before yielded ourselves servants to obey ; and also having, by that death, purchased us by his blood. Consequently, seeing that Christ is our absolute Lord and Master ; since he hath bought us, and hath the sole right to the property and possession of us ; we must remember, that we are not our own ; that we ought not to do our own will, but his ; and neither live nor die to ourselves, but only to him.

Some, who pretend to be guided by right and sound reason, seem to stumble at the dignity of the person, whom we believe to have given himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of mankind : they ask, ‘ How it is possible, the only-begotten Son of God should be made flesh, and become man ? ‘ How is it conceivable, that God should condescend so far, as to send ; and the Son of God condescend willingly to be sent, and do such great things for his creatures ? And above all, How is it consistent with reason, to suppose God condescending to do so much, for such frail and weak creatures as men ; who in all appearance, seem to be but a very small, low, and inconsiderable part of this world ?’

Here it must readily be acknowledged, that human reason could never have discovered such a method as this, for the making peace between sinners and an offended God, without express revelation : But then, neither on the other side, when once this method is made known, is there any such difficulty or inconceivableness in it, as can reasonably make a wise and considerate man call in question the truth of well-attested revelation, merely upon that account ; which (indeed) any plain absurdity or contradiction in the matter of a doctrine, pretended to be revealed, would (it must be confessed) unavoidably effect. For, as to the possibility of the incarnation of the Son of God, whatever mysteriousness there confessedly was in the manner

*Why called
our Lord.*

Objection.

Answer.

manner of it; yet, as to the thing itself, there is evidently no more unreasonableness in believing the possibility of it, than in believing the union of our soul and body, or any other certain truth; which we plainly see, implies no contradiction in the thing itself, at the same time, that we are sensible we cannot discover the manner, in which it is done: Neither is it at all unreasonable, to believe, that God should make so great a condescension to his creatures; and that a person of such dignity, as the only-begotten Son of God, should vouchsafe to give himself a sacrifice for the sins of men. He, who duly considers, that it is no diminution to the glory and greatness of the Father of all things, to inspect, govern, and direct every thing by his all-wise providence through the whole creation; to take care even of the meanest of his creatures, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground, nor a hair of our head perishes, without his knowledge; and to observe exactly every particle, even of inanimate matter, in the universe: he (I say) who duly considers this, cannot with reason think it any real disparagement to the Son of God, though a most wonderful and amazing instance (indeed) of humility and condescension; that he should concern himself so far for sinful men, as to appear in their nature, to reveal the will of God more clearly to them, to give himself a sacrifice and expiation for their sins, and to bring them to repentance and eternal happiness.

By these and such-like considerations, we arrive at the truth and excellency of the christian religion; which is that manner of worshipping and serving God, which was revealed to the world by Jesus Christ; wherein are contained, articles of faith to be believed, precepts of life to be practised, and motives and arguments to enforce obedience. The truth of this religion appears, from that full and clear evidence, which our Saviour and his apostles gave of their divine mission and authority; and from the nature of that religion they taught, which was worthy of God, and tended to the happiness and welfare of mankind. It is not only universally acknowledged by christians, but hath been own-

*The truth
and ex-
cellency of
Christiani-
ty proved.*

ed by Jews and Heathens, who have written of those times; 'That there was such a person as
' Jesus Christ, who lived in the reign of Ti- *From His-*
' berius Cæsar: And, that the same Jesus *tory.*
was crucified, as averred both by the Christians, who
(notwithstanding the ignominy they might thereby seem
to bring upon themselves) worshipped him as God; but
also by the Jews. It is also very probable, there were
public records of the whole matter at Rome; as the ac-
count was sent, by the Roman governor, from Jerusalem
to Cæsar: for the ancient Christians, in their writings in
the defence of their religion, appeal thereto; which
they had too much understanding and modesty to have
done, if no such account had ever been sent, or had not
been then extant to be produced; so that no history can
be better established, by the unanimous testimony of
people, otherwise very different from one another, than
the life and death of Christ Jesus. Besides,

All the former prophecies, which related to the Mes-
siah, were fulfilled in him alone. He receiv- *From pro-*
ed the testimony of a voice from heaven, se- *phesy.*
veral times; and was endowed with the pow-
er of working miracles, particularly with the gift of pro-
phesy, proved and made good by the 'fulfilling of his
own predictions: than which, nothing can be a greater
evidence of a divine mission; because it is the greatest
argument of infinite power and wisdom.

The miracles, which he wrought, proved him to be
sent from God: For, the power of working *From Mi-*
true miracles, when they are great and un- *racles.*
questionable, and frequently wrought in pub-
lic, is one of the highest evidences we can have, of the
divine mission of any person. Upon this ground, Nico-
demus concludes, that our Saviour was sent from God:
and our Saviour himself insists upon this, as the great
proof of his divine authority; and the resisting the evi-
dence of his miracles he reckons, as an aggravation of
unbelief: 'If I had not (saith he) done among them
' the works, which none other man did, they had not
' had sin: and further he tells us, such an obstinate resist-
ance of the evidence of his miracles is the sin against
the Holy Ghost. The greatest enemies to him and our
holy

holy religion confess, that our Saviour did many wonderful things, though they attribute them to the power of magic. He healed all sorts of diseases in multitudes of people, by a touch or word, and that sometimes upon those at a distance: The most desperate distempers submitted to his power; he restored sight to the man born blind; he made the woman straight, who had been crooked and bowed together eighteen years; and the man, who had an infirmity thirty-eight years, he bids take up his bed and walk; he multiplied a few loaves and fishes, for the feeding of some thousands; and raised several from the dead, particularly Lazarus, after he had been four days in the grave. All these miracles he wrought publicly, in the midst of his enemies, and indeed they were so public and so undeniable, that the Apostle appeals to the Jews themselves; declaring, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them, by miracles, and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as they themselves also knew. But the great miracle, which gave the utmost evidence of our Saviour's divine authority, was his raising himself from the dead on the third day; a matter of fact, which all Christians have not only believed, but esteem the great foundation on which they build the proof of their whole belief.*

Besides, the spirit of prophecy resided in him; and his divine authority was made manifest, by the accomplishment of his own predictions: *From his prophecies of himself.* For, whenever the predictions have been plain and clear, and the event answerable; it hath been always counted a sure proof of a Divine mission: upon which account the angel tells St. John, that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Thus our Saviour foretold his own death, with the manner of it, and the circumstances of his sufferings; the treachery of Judas, the cowardice of his disciples, and St. Peter's denying him: his own resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost in miraculous gifts. He prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem, which came to pass in forty

* See the article treated of Sunday 4. Sect. iv.

Sund. 3.] *The Truth, &c. of Christianity.* 89

ty years after his own death, within the compass of that generation, as he had foretold: The very foundations of the temple and city were destroyed, and the ground ploughed up; so that there was not left one stone upon another, which was not thrown down; according to our Saviour's prediction: and indeed the signs, which he foretold should forerun the destruction of that city, with the circumstances which came with it and followed after, exactly agree with that punctual and credible history of the fact, related by Josephus. He also assured his disciples, that his gospel should be published in all nations, and that his religion should prevail against all the opposition of worldly power and malice, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it: which things being purely contingent in respect of us, and many of them unlikely to happen; the fulfilling of such predictions argues a prophetic spirit in our Saviour, and consequently, that he was sent from God.

If christianity were an imposture, it was a strange imposture indeed; an imposture, beneficial to the world, but destructive to the authors, in the nature and tendency of the thing itself: beneficial (I say) to the world, since it forbade every vice, and enjoined every virtue; which could make a man more happy in himself, more serviceable to the world, and more acceptable to God. There are few or none other public actions, but what a witty malice may put some sinister interpretation upon; and the best deeds in appearance may, and (no question) often do, proceed from a principle of vanity: but the actions of Christ and his Apostles will stand the test of the severest scrutiny. The Apostles could not act, upon any indirect and interested views of worldly honour, ambition, or gain: they must have been supported, by a determined resolution of mind, to bear the utmost pressures of misery and torment, in the cause of truth, founded upon a prospect of future happiness. Therefore,

Unless we believe in this article, where is our faith and hope in the redemption wrought by the sacrifice of Christ Jesus; which could never have been performed by any person, but by him, who is God as well as man? He must have been a sacrifice of infinite dignity; and

*From the
Acts of the
Apostles.*

*Why we
must believe
in this ar-
ticle.*

nothing

nothing less could bear any proportion to the infinite guilt of our sins, as being committed against a God of infinite goodness and majesty. By this belief we are encouraged, and freed from all doubt and scruple, in giving to Christ that divine honour, which is due to him: which if we ascribe to him, without being satisfied that it is his due; we cannot wholly free ourselves from that idolatry, which is a breach of the first commandment. By this faith also of the inward dignity of Christ, we may learn to raise our affections to the utmost pitch our nature is capable of, in the admiration of that wonderful goodness of the Father in sending his beloved Son to die for us, while we were his enemies, rebels, and apostate creatures; and of that wonderful love and condescension of the Son, in so far debasing himself for our sakes, who deserved the most grievous vials of his wrath and indignation to revenge the breach of his covenant.

VII. In these words, by which the angel told the virgin Mary, 'that she should be the mother of Jesus Christ; that her son should be great, and called the Son of the Highest; that the Lord God should give unto him the throne of his father David; that he should reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and, that of his kingdom there should be no end;' is contained an astonishing message, looking back to the prophecy concerning the Messiah, which foretold, 'The government should be upon his shoulder; and his name should be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, everlasting with the Father, the Prince of Peace*; of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever.' For, the Angel's description of the Messiah imports, that God would settle upon the Messiah a spiritual kingdom (of which the temporal kingdom of David was but an imperfect representation) the absolute government of his church the spiritual house of Jacob; and that this kingdom of his should never be destroyed, as the kingdom of the Jews was to be: All which is now fulfilled.

This

Sund. 3.] *The Angel's Salutation to Mary.* 91

This declaration was preceded by the salutation, made to the blessed Virgin by the same angel, in these words: 'Hail thou, that art highly favoured! The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women.' The meaning of which was, that the Blessed Virgin was most excellently disposed to receive the greatest honour, ever done to the daughters of men: her employment being holy and pious, her body chaste, and her soul adorned with all virtues; particularly with humility, which is of great price in the sight of God. Though she was to be the mother of an universal and everlasting blessing, which all former ages had desired, and all future times should rejoice in; yet she resigns all this glory, to him that gave it; and declares, whence she received it; that none other name, but his, might have the honour. When she received this salutation, she was troubled at the saying of the angel; judging herself unworthy of so great an honour, and surprised at the strangeness of such an appearance in her retirement. But, when the angel positively affirmed, that she should conceive and bring forth the Messiah; she inquires, how that could be, since she knew not a man? Yet this implied in her no doubt concerning the thing, nor any diffidence in respect to the issue of it; but rather admiration, in respect to the wonderful manner of effecting it: at most it implies, that she desired to be satisfied in the manner, as well as in the matter of this mystery; and therefore the angel answers the difficulty, by declaring the wonderful manner, in which his message should be brought about: 'That the Holy Ghost should come upon her; and that the power of the Highest should overshadow her:' then he furnished her, with an example of somewhat of like nature, in her cousin; and referred her to the power of God, to which nothing is impossible to be done. Upon this she demonstrated an entire faith and obedience by her reply: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Be it unto me, according to thy word!' Then the blessed Virgin expresses her gratitude, in that admirable hymn called the *Magnificat*: wherein she shews such a thankful sense of the great honour, which was

His salutation.

Mary's resignation.

was conferred upon her ; and testifies her humility and devotion, as well as the infinite power and goodness of God, that (it appears) as she was highly favoured, so she was also full of grace, and had a mind plentifully enriched with the gifts of God's holy spirit.

Thus was the only-begotten Son of God, *conceived by God made the HOLY GHOST ; and took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance :* so that two whole and perfect natures (that is to say, the Godhead and manhood) were joined together in one person, never to be divided ; whereof is one Christ, very God and very man : Who was seen and handled ; who was arraigned, condemned, and crucified, and afterwards laid in the grave ; not indeed in his divine, but in his human nature ; ' to reconcile his Father to us ; and to be a sacrifice, not only for ' original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.'*

When we profess, that we believe our Saviour Jesus *Christ was born of the Virgin Mary ; we are also to believe, that Mary, espoused unto Joseph (who, before and after her espousals was a pure and unspotted Virgin) having, by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, conceived within her womb the only-begotten Son of God, did bring him forth after the natural time of other women : So that the Saviour of the world was born of a woman, made under the law, without the least pretence of any original corruption ; that he might deliver us from the guilt of sin : For thus our church expresses it ; ' Christ, in the truth of ' our nature, was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted ; from which he was clearly void, both in ' his flesh, and in his spirit : He came to be a lamb without spot ; who, by sacrifice of himself once made, ' should take away the sins of the world : and sin (as ' St. John saith) was not in him. But we all (though ' baptized and born again in Christ) offend in many ' things, and, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'†*

He

* See the 2d Article of Religion.
article of Religion.

† See the 15th Article of Religion.

He was born of a virgin, of the house and lineage of *David*; that he might sit upon his throne, and rule for evermore. That the promised Messiah was to be born after this miraculous manner, the prophecies of the Old Testament foretold. One says, 'The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth, a woman shall compass a man:' another says, 'Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel:' In consequence whereof his mother was a *pure Virgin*; as appears both from her own account, and that of Joseph her reputed husband: for, when Joseph doubted of her chastity, an angel was dispatched to clear her honour; to assure him, that what was conceived in her, was not by man, but *of the Holy Ghost*; And, when she objected the impossibility of her being a mother, the angel explains it to her, by the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her. This was so unquestionable to the Apostles and primitive christians, that they universally and firmly believed it; and thought it a point of so great moment, as to deserve place in that summary of the christian faith, called the Apostles Creed.

*Of the house
of David.*

*Of a pure
Virgin.*

*Conceived
of the Holy
Ghost.*

The place of our Saviour's birth was *Bethlehem*; whither Joseph and Mary went, in obedience to the decree of Augustus, to be taxed; the providence of God making use of this conjuncture, by verifying a prophecy, to signify and publish the birth of the true Messiah. The concourse of people to Bethlehem was so great, that they could find no accommodation, but a *stable*, wherein the blessed virgin brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; doing, herself, the offices of a pious and tender parent; whilst all the angels of God worshipped him, and published to the world the glad tidings of his birth. For, as certain shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night, the angel of the Lord came unto them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; so that the splendour of the

*Born at
Bethlehem.*

In a stable.

*Published
by angels.*

appearance confounded their senses, and made them sore afraid: But the angel quickly removed the terror which seized them, with the tidings he brought of great joy to all people, in these comfortable words; 'Unto you 'is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which 'is *Christ* the Lord.' Yet, lest they should expect a prince accompanied with pomp and magnificence, the angel described the meanness and obscurity of his circumstances, as a token to guide them in the search of this new-born prince: 'This shall be a sign unto you, ye 'shall find the babe wrapt in swaddling-clothes, and lying in a manger.' And, having this notice, the shepherds immediately went to Bethlehem; and, having found the account true, they returned, glorifying and praising God.

*Worshipped
by shepherds.*

The Jews were in a general expectation of the appearing of the Messiah, at the *time of his birth*; as appears from the ancient and general tradition, 'That, at the end of the second 'two thousand years, the Messiah should appear:' and likewise from that particular computation of the Jewish doctors, not long before our Saviour's coming; who, upon a solemn debate of that matter, did determine, 'the Messiah would come within fifty years:' which is confirmed by the great jealousy Herod had, concerning a king of the Jews, expected about that time to be born; and by the testimony of Josephus, who tells us, the Jews rebelled against the Romans, being encouraged thereto by a celebrated prophecy in their scriptures; 'That, about that time, a famous prince should be born among them, who should have dominion over all the Earth; that the heathen world was also in expectation of such an appearance, is evident from the famous testimonies of two eminent Roman historians.' Suetonius says, 'There was 'an ancient and general opinion, famous throughout all the eastern parts; "that the fates had determined, there "should those come out of Judea, who should govern "the world:" Which words seem to be a verbal translation of that prophecy, 'Out of Judah shall come the 'ruler.' Tacitus writes, 'That a great many were 'possessed with a persuasion, "that it was contained in 'the ancient books of the priests; and, at that very
time,

“time, the east should prevail, and they, who should govern the world, were to come out of Judea :” Which phrase, ‘that the East should prevail,’ refers to that title given the Messiah by the prophet, who says, He is called the man, whose name is the East.*

When our Saviour appeared in the world, he scattered and dispelled that cloud of Idolatry, and that corruption of manners, which had fatally overspread it : he became a light to lighten the Gentiles, as he was the glory of his people Israel. Under the conduct of such a guide, we cannot fail of acquiring the knowledge of God’s will in this world, and the comfortable expectation of life everlasting in the world to come ; whether we consider the dignity and excellency of his person, the clearness and perfection of his precepts, or the brightness of his own example ; together with the encouragements of the gracious assistances and glorious rewards, which he hath promised to all those, who engage and persevere in his service. He, who lay in the bosom of the father, and had the Spirit communicated to him without measure ; in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; could not want a perfect knowledge, of what was most agreeable to the divine will ; and consequently we must have abundant reason, to put our trust and confidence in that method of attaining salvation, which he hath discovered ; nor can we fail of success, if we be not wanting to ourselves by neglecting it : for, it not only directs us to the true object of worship, and gives us rational and worthy notions of that Being we are obliged to adore ; but is most fitly adapted to raise our natures, to the greatest improvement they are capable of in this world.

Its advantages to man.

* For, though we translate it Branch, yet the Hebrew word signifies both, and may be rendered the one as well as the other.

SUNDAY IV.

I. *Of the Sufferings, Crucifixion ; and II. Of the Death,*
 III. *Burial, IV. Resurrection, and V. Ascension of*
 JESUS CHRIST. VI. *Of his Mediatorial Office,*
and sitting at the Right-hand of God ; And VII. Of his
coming to judge the world at the last day.

IN the *fourth* ARTICLE of our Christian Faith, we
 thankfully profess our belief ; ‘ That this same Jesus
 Christ, (the eternal Son of God ; begotten
 of his Father before all worlds, God of
 God, very God of very God, the Prince of
 glory, the heir of everlasting bliss, the promised Mess-
 ah ; who taking the nature of man, was yet in that na-
 ture still the same person as he was before) *suffered under*
 ‘ PONTIUS PILATE ; *was crucified, died, and was buried.*
 He was subject to all those frailties and infirmities, those
 outward injuries and violent impressions, to which morta-
 lity is liable : His whole life was full of sufferings, from
 his birth in the stable, to his death on the cross ; but par-
 ticularly in his last bitter passion, he suffered most exqui-
 site pains and torments in his body, and inexpressible fears
 and sorrows and unknown anguish in his soul ; insomuch,
 that he sweat drops of blood. One of his disciples be-
 trayed him, and he was denied by another : He was ap-
 prehended, and bound by the rude soldiers, as a male-
 factor ; accused by false witnesses ; arraigned and con-
 demned by that judge, who declared he could find no
 fault in him : He was buffeted, and scourged, and spit
 upon ; derided and mocked, by the people, the soldiers,
 and at last by the High priest himself : He was made the
 scorn and contempt and sport, of his insolent and insulting
 enemies ; and was hurried to death, by the clamours of
 the rabble, who cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him :* and
 accordingly he was nailed to the cross ; on
 which, after having hung several hours, he
 gave up the ghost. This way of putting to
 death was called crucifixion : a Roman punishment, re-
 markable for the exquisite pains and ignominy of it.
 The torment of it arose from the piercing with nails those
 parts

parts of the body, which are most nervous ; and yet, without quickly causing death : and the shame of it is evident from those, upon whom it was inflicted ; being only slaves, and such as had run away from their masters.

That our Saviour also suffered in his Mind, appears from those grievous agonies he felt : first, in the Garden, just before his apprehension ; when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even

*Tormented
in mind.*

unto death ; when he sweat (as it were) drops of blood, and prayed thrice with great vehemence to his Father, ' that if it were possible, that bitter cup might pass from him : ' secondly, from that inconceivable anguish, which he expressed upon the cross ; when he broke out into that passionate exclamation, ' My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ! ' Thus evil to come tormented his soul with fear ; and evil present, with sadness, anguish, and sorrow : not, that he suffered the torments of the damned ; for as he knew no guile, consequently he deserved and could suffer no punishment. But when we reflect, how perfectly the blessed Jesus understood the evil and guilt of sin ; how zealous he was of God's glory ; how desirous of the salvation of mankind : and yet withal, that he knew, how small a number would be saved ; how an ungrateful and rebellious world would frustrate the end of his death, and the designs of his mercy : we may (in some measure) guess at that anguish, which sunk and depressed him in such a wonderful manner, as made him say, ' My soul is sorrowful even unto death. ' For we may imagine, how much he, who loved us so well as to die to redeem us, might be grieved and afflicted ; when he foresaw, that even by his dying he should not save us all from the damnation of hell.

But here let it be remarked, that our blessed Saviour suffered only in his *human* nature, that nature of man, which he took upon him : yet, since it was united to the divine nature, and since

*Only as
Man*

there was a most intimate conjunction of both natures in the person of the Son ; there did from thence result a true proper communication of names, characters, and properties : so that the very eternal Son of God may rightly be said to have suffered, whatsoever the man Christ Jesus endured in the flesh, for sinners ; because

the properties of each nature separate may reasonably be affirmed of that person, in whom the two natures are united by the power of God. And our Saviour suffered the painful and shameful death of the cross, to deliver us from the wrath to come, and to purchase eternal redemption for us: thus our church declares; 'That the offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and that there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.'*

The reason, of his undergoing these sufferings, was; *The reason why.* that he might put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself; that he might be a propitiation for us, through Faith in his blood; that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and to give us a perfect pattern of patience and resignation to the will of God, and of all those christian virtues which are necessary to qualify us to receive the benefit of his satisfaction; *leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.* For,

When by our sins we had justly incurred the displeasure of almighty God, and were liable to eternal misery; our blessed Saviour discharged the obligation; and, by shedding his most precious blood, as the price of our redemption, made satisfaction to God for us: He was contented, to be offered a sacrifice for us, to bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and to atone for the guilt of our offences by the one oblation of himself once offered for us all: And he died, not only for our benefit and advantage, but in our place and stead; so that if he had not died, we had eternally perished, without being able to escape the justice of an angry God: For which reason the blood of Christ, which was shed for us upon the cross, is called the blood of the covenant; because thereupon God was pleased, to enter into a covenant of grace and mercy with mankind; wherein he hath promised and engaged (for the sake of Christ's sufferings, voluntarily undergone upon
our

* See the 31st Article of Religion.

our account and in our stead) to forgive the sins of all those who truly repent and believe, and to make them partakers of eternal life in the world to come.

The reason and necessity for our believing that Christ suffered, appears from the assurance we thence receive, that he was truly man; which if he were not, man could not be redeemed by him. We are also hereby assured, that satisfaction is made to the justice of God for our sins; whereof, by his decree, no remission could be, without shedding of blood. We likewise learn from this faith, that he is truly affected with the utmost compassion of our afflictions, and is a most faithful and merciful High-priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and therefore ready to succour them that are tempted. And finally, such a belief as this prepares us to receive with patience the sufferings of this life; for, if God spared not his own Son, how shall he spare his adopted sons, whose best evidence of their being his children is their being under his Fatherly correction? Otherwise, as the Apostle observes, we should be bastards, and not Sons: but if, when we suffer with him, we also suffer like him, and follow the admirable pattern he has left us of humility and patience, and absolute submission to the will of God; we then shall be made partakers of his divine holiness. As, by his crucifixion, our Saviour cancell'd the obligation we were under to perform the whole law, and blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances, which was against us and contrary to us; and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: so we ought to learn, that if we will be Christ's, we must crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts: and glory in nothing, save in the cross of Jesus Christ crucified.

The use and necessity of this faith.

II. Although Jesus was both God and Man, yet he did truly and properly die, by an actual departure of his soul from his body; in the union of which, his life (as Man) consisted:

Of Christ's death.

as appears, not only from the many plain texts of scripture, which say that he died; but farther from these following. 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!' and having thus said, he gave up the ghost,' by the means of a violent death, caused by the pains and

tortures inflicted on him ; which without a miracle, must dissolve the natural disposition of the body, necessary to continue its union with the soul. He voluntarily (I say) submitted himself to that violence, which could not have been forced upon him without such a submission ; and therefore he saith, ‘ No man taketh away my ‘ life from me ; but I lay it down of myself, &c.’ And, after he had so submitted himself, he could not, by the course of nature, avoid that death

After this view of the humiliation of our blessed Saviour, it cannot be improper for us, to consider, what effect his life, doctrine, and suffering should have upon us ;

How Christ draws us to God.

and to remark, by what steps he draws us to God : in which enquiry we shall soon be convinced, that his method to prevent our falling into sinful actions was to lay a restraint upon our thoughts, which lead to them, and to oblige us to govern our looks, give birth to our thoughts.

By precept.

To obviate all those evils, which proceed from an inordinate desire of riches, he hath discovered to us that admirable temper of mind distinguished in his gospel by *poverty of spirit* ; which maketh us even sit loose, to the good things we possess : To keep us at a distance from the temptations of lying and detraction, he hath forbidden all idle words ; that the care to avoid them might secure us from falling in to those greater crimes : To hinder the fatal effects of anger and revenge, he hath nipped those passions in the bud, by commanding us to *love our enemies*, and to *do good to them that hate us* : To facilitate the virtue of patience, so necessary in this vale of tears ; he hath manifested to us the treasures which are hidden in adversity, and the advantage of being persecuted for his sake : that, what the world calls misfortune and calamity, often proves the blessed occasion of making us happy both in this and the next life ; ‘ Blessed are they, that mourn ; blessed are they, that are persecuted.’ And, to make us quiet and easy in ourselves, and gentle to others ; he requireth us to have a quick sense of our own weaknesses and defects, and readily to condescend to the lowest offices for the good of our distressed brethren.

All these commands he enforces by his own example ; for, in his own person, he hath recommended to us the most hard and difficult, as *By example.* well as those which are most useful and serviceable. To teach us piety and devotion, he frequently retired and spent whole nights in prayer, and from worldly occurrences raised matter for spiritual thoughts ; and conformed, not only to divine institutions, but to human appointments which tended to promote virtue : That we might learn humility, this Prince of Glory condescended to the poverty of a stable ; this Wisdom of the father became dumb, and was reduced to the simplicity of an infant ; he spent thirty years of his life in retirement, subject to his parents, and unknown to the world. That we might be ready to exercise universal charity to the bodies and souls of men, the whole course of his life was employed in good works ; That we might suppress all ambitious desires, he refused the offer of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them ; and when the people would have made him a king, he withdrew, and they knew not where to find him out. That we might be obedient to government, he paid tribute ; though he was free from any such obligation, and was forced to work a miracle to perform it : That we might live above the world, he chose to have no part or share in the possession of it ; the Son of man not having, where to lay his head. He was perfectly contented in his main circumstances, that in all our sufferings we might be resigned to the will of God : in his bitter agony, he renounced the strongest inclination of nature, and submitted to the appointment of the Almighty. That a regard to the judgment of the world might not prevail upon us, to transgress the laws of our God ; he made himself of no reputation ; and to do good to mankind, was contented to be esteemed one of the worst of men : a magician, an impostor, a friend and companion of publicans and sinners, and a seducer of the people. And, to resist all temptations to anger, and preserve an evenness of mind under all provocations, he bore with the dulness and slowness of his disciples, both in their understanding and believing what he plainly taught ; and answered the sharpest reproaches of his enemies with

calm arguments and modest silence, never bringing railing accusation instead of a sound reason. That we might practise that difficult duty of *loving our enemies*, he prayed most earnestly for his enemies, even when he felt the most cruel effects of their malice; and imputed it to their ignorance: 'Father (says he) forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And, that he might excite us to the performance of our duty, he has offered pardon and forgiveness of what is past, and perfect reconciliation to God, by the merits of his Death and passion; provided we return to him, by sincere repentance, faith, and obedience to his law.

He strengthens us at present, and enables us to do our duty, by enlightening our dark minds, by exciting our wills to that which is good, and by raising our courage under difficulties, dangers, and temptations: he raises our fears, by the threatenings of eternal punishment in the next life; and encourages our hopes, by the promises of everlasting rewards to the whole man, body and soul; which are the most powerful considerations to take men off from sin, and bring them to goodness, whereby they may obtain eternal life.

Wherefore it should be our greatest care to please him, by a constant regard to his commandments, and an endeavour to prevail on others to do the same; by making a daily progress in virtue and piety, that we may be conformed to the likeness of that beloved object; by setting a great value upon all means and opportunities of conversing with him, in prayer and meditation, in hearing his word, and receiving the blessed tokens of his love, which he hath left us in the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; by being more provoked to hear his holy name blasphemed, than for any reproach that can be cast upon ourselves; and by longing for his glorious appearing, that we may enjoy him without interruption to all eternity, in the glory of God the Father.

*What we
ought to
learn from
hence.*

III. Christ, being taken down from the cross was buried, as had been typified, by Jonah's lying three days and three nights in the Whale's belly; and intimated in that of the Psalmist, *My flesh shall rest in hope, &c.* which plainly teacheth, that the Body was to be buried, but not lie in the grave to see corruption. Isaiah is more exprets; saying, 'He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.' Whence this part of our christian faith should work within us correspondent to it: for we are buried with him, in Baptisin, unto death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life, being raised from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness.

*His Burial.**Its Influence.*

As Christ died for us, and was buried; so also is it to be believed, that he went down into hell.* And here let it be remarked,

His descent into hell.

that the pious solemnities used in the burial of our Saviour, the honourable mention of the persons concerned in it, and of the woman who brake the box of precious ointment to prepare his body for it; have been in all ages thought

Recommend. decent burials.

sufficient grounds, for the decent burials used in the christian church: and this custom of the church (it is said) had a great influence, in the conversion of the heathens; and, after christianity had gotten possession of the Roman empire, it soon put an end to the old custom of burning the bodies of the dead. Nature itself directs, that some respect be paid to the dead bodies of men, for the sake of the souls which once inhabited them; but much more to those, which have been the living temples of the Holy Ghost; and which, being bought by Christ, shall be one day made like unto his glorious body, according to that mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

IV. In the *fifth* ARTICLE of our christian faith we profess to believe, that JESUS CHRIST *on the third day rose again from the dead.* The beloved and only-begotten Son of God, who was crucified and died for our sins, did not long

Of the resurrection of Christ.

* See the 3d Article of Religion.

continue in the state of death ; but on the third day, * by his infinite power, did truly revive, and raise himself again from death ; ‘ and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man’s nature ;’ † reuniting the same soul to the same body which was buried ; and so rose the same man, according to the testimony of sufficient and credible witnesses, thoroughly informed concerning the fact. These witnesses were the pious women ; who, thinking with sweet spices to have anointed him dead, found him risen : the apostles, who conversed with him frequently after his resurrection, were satisfied he had a real body, by his eating and drinking with them ; and one of them searched the holes the nails had made in the hands, and thrust his hand into his side : All the other disciples testified the same, to whom he also appeared, even to five hundred brethren at one time. Then he was seen of James : He appeared to Stephen, at his martyrdom, and to St. Paul at his conversion, in his way to Damascus. The veracity of these witnesses cannot be doubted ; because the doctrine they taught, forbid all falshood upon pain of damnation : Again, the sealing the truth of this fact with their blood is a sufficient evidence of their veracity.

Whoever looks into the preaching of the apostles, will find, the resurrection was the great article they insisted on. St. Paul knew the weight of this article, and the necessity of teaching it, when he said, ‘ If Christ be not risen, our faith is vain.’ I am sensible, it is common for men to die for false opinions : but, even in these cases, their suffering is an evidence of their sincerity, and it would be very hard, to charge men, who die for the doctrine they profess, with insincerity in the profession :
mistaken

* He was buried three days, according to the common computation of days, both ancient and modern, and particularly in scripture computation. So Lazarus is said to be four days dead, though the fourth day, whereon he was raised, was one of them. Eight days were said to be accomplished for Christ’s circumcision ; but the day of his birth, and circumcision too, went both into that account.

† See the 4th Article of Religion.

mistaken they may be, but every mistaken man is not a cheat. Now, if we do but allow the suffering of the apostles to prove their sincerity, which no man can well disallow; and consider, that they died for the truth of a matter of fact, which they had seen themselves; we shall perceive the objections usually brought against this article of our faith will quickly vanish. In doctrines and matters of opinion men mistake perpetually; and it is no reason for me to take up with another man's opinion, because I am persuaded he is sincere in it: but, when a man reports to me an uncommon Fact, yet such a Fact, as in its own nature is a plain object of sense; if I believe him not, my suspicion does not arise from the inability of human senses to judge in the case, but from a doubt of the sincerity of the reporter: in such cases therefore, there wants nothing to be proved, but only the sincerity of the reporter; and since voluntary suffering for the truth is at least a proof of sincerity, the sufferings of the apostles for the truth of resurrection is a full and unexceptionable proof. I am sensible, there are many instances of men's suffering and dying, in an obstinate denial of the truth of facts plainly proved; but then, when criminals persist in denying their crimes, they often do it (and there is reason, to suspect they do it always) in hopes of a pardon or reprieve. But, what are such instances, to the present purpose? All such men suffer against their will, and for their crimes; and their obstinacy is built on the hope of escaping, by moving the compassion of the government or the spectators. Seeing then, the apostles died in asserting the truth of Christ's resurrection; it was always in their power, to quit their evidence and save their lives; even their bitterest enemies the Jews required no more of them, than to be silent: *But, that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name,* Acts iv. 17. *Did not we straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.* Acts v. 28. Others have denied or asserted facts, in hopes of saving their lives, when they were under sentence of death; but these men attested a fact, at the expence of their lives, which they might have saved by denying the

truth : so that, between criminals dying and denying plain facts, and the apostles dying for their testimony, there is this material difference : criminals deny the truth, in hopes of saving their lives ; but the apostles willingly parted with their lives, rather than deny the truth. But, to return : Have we not the testimony of his very enemies, to bear witness of this great truth ? The soldiers, who watched at the sepulchre, and pretended to keep his body from the hands of the apostles, felt the earth trembling under them ; and saw the countenance of an angel like lightening, and his raiment white as snow ; they, who upon this sight did shake and became as dead men, while he, whom they kept became alive : even some of these came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things which were done, when Christ rose from the dead. The angels also, *Testified by* that heavenly host, which brought the glad *Angels.* tidings of his birth to the shepherds, bore evidence to the truth thereof : One came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it : Two in white, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, said unto the women ; ' Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen.' Luke xxiv. 5.

The reason, of Christ's appearing only to his followers, *Why he ap-* and not to the Jewish nation, is ; it was ne-
peared only cessary, that those only, who were to be the
to his dis- first publishers of the gospel, should have the
ciples. utmost evidence and satisfaction concerning the truth and reality of Christ's resurrection : for, by the same reason, that he was obliged to have appeared to the Jewish nation, it might be pleaded, that the whole Roman empire ought to have the like manifestation, and that he should have shewn himself, to the unbelieving in all succeeding ages.

It was necessary, Christ should rise from the dead, to shew, the debt he died for was discharged ; and that his satisfaction was accepted in heaven : ' If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins.' Besides, he rose to prove himself to be the Messiah, and to evince the truth and divinity of his doctrine, which he had enjoined to be observed by all men :
To prove his *divinity.*

he had appealed to his resurrection, as a sign of his being a true prophet; and therefore, by the way of trial, which God prescribed the Jews, (*viz.* the accomplishment of predictions) he had appeared to be a false prophet, had he failed therein; for, 'if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain.' God's having raised our Saviour from the dead, after he was condemned and put to death for calling himself the Son of God; is a demonstration, that he really was the Son of God; and if he was the Son of God, the doctrine he taught, was truth from God, and is our guide to heaven.

Again, the Resurrection of Christ is an argument of our resurrection; because, by his rising from the dead, he became the first fruits of them that slept: by this is secured our resurrection to eternal life; that he, who hath promised to raise us up, did raise himself from the dead.

To prove the resurrection of our bodies.

V. In the *sixth* ARTICLE of our Christian Faith we profess to believe, that JESUS *ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right-hand of God, the Father almighty.* The same Jesus, who *The scenss- on of Christ,* by his power rose again for our justification; having for the space of forty days confirmed the truth of his resurrection, by appearing several times to his disciples, discoursing with them, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God; finished his course upon earth, with blessing his disciples: for, while he was blessing them, and they beheld and looked stedfastly towards heaven, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight; and behold, Jesus being ascended up into the highest heavens, two angels appeared unto the disciples with the comfortable promise, 'that, as Jesus was taken from them into heaven, so he should return in a glorious manner to judge the world.' All this was done, for the confirmation of the certainty and reality of this great mystery of our faith. Eye-witnesses were necessary here, though not in the act of his Resurrection; because, whatever was a proof of his life after death, was a demonstration of his resurrection: but, the apostles not being able to see him in heaven, it was necessary they should be eye-witnesses of his act of ascending, that so they might be able to give testimony thereto. Before the

Why in the sight of his disciples.

the apostles saw our Saviour ascend, he had told them, whither he was going, and what power and dignity would be conferred upon him; and, as an evidence of his exaltation to the right hand of God, had promised to send down the Holy Ghost upon them in a sensible manner: so that they, receiving afterwards the wonderful effects of his being there, had abundant evidence of his exaltation; namely, his Ascension into the heaven of heavens, the presence of God: where his human nature is seated, far above all angels and arch-angels, principalities and powers, at the right-hand of God the Father.

Since our Lord's Ascension is of that great advantage to mankind, it may and has been asked; *And not of the Jews.* 'Why did he not ascend, in the sight of the Jews; that they, who had been deceived before at the time of his crucifixion, might have received a conviction of their error?' To which it is answered; that it was necessary, they only, who were to preach the gospel, should have the utmost evidence of those matters of fact they testified. God's design was, to bring the world to salvation by the exercise of faith; which is an act of assent upon the testimony of another, inconsistent with sight: moreover, it is to be doubted, whether they, who ascribed our Saviour's miracles to the power of the devil, and suborned the soldiers to say upon his resurrection, 'that his disciples stole him away;' would not have called his Ascension (had they seen it) a phantasm and vain apparition of the spirit of some corrupt man. But whatever the reason be; since God appointed it to be so, it is not the business of the creature, to ask the Creator his reasons for such and such acts of his omnipotency.

SUNDAY IV. PART II.

VI. Christ, being now seated at the right-hand of God, *Of his office in heaven.* is become a perpetual patron and advocate in our behalf; to plead our cause, to solicit our concerns, to represent our wants, and to offer up our prayers and requests to God, by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, which he offered up on the cross, for the sins of the whole world. This his sitting at the right-hand of God is expressly foretold

in these words ; ' The Lord saith unto my Lord, *Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy foot-stool:*' and we are assured by the holy penmen, that Jesus is actually there ; one tells us, ' that he was received up into heaven, and sitteth at the right-hand of God ;' another records, ' that God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places.' But such scripture phrases are not to be taken in a strict and proper sense, but in a figurative sense ; as spoken, in condescension to our capacities, and after the manner of men, and by way of comparison to what belongs to mankind : and, as the sitting at a prince's right-hand is esteemed a place of the highest honour, the first import of this phrase seems to be, that Christ is invested with the highest glory from God, and exalted to the highest dignity ; and, since by the hand of God his infinite power may be signified, this phrase may further import Christ's having received the highest power and dominion from God : but, where Christ is said to be sitting, we are not to understand, that he is determined to such a particular posture of body, as is commonly meant by sitting ; for, he is sometimes represented as standing at God's right-hand ; sometimes in general as being there, without expressing the particular manner of it : by his sitting therefore, we are to understand his secure and quiet continuance in that high glory, majesty, and judicature ; and his full possession of dignity, and perpetuity in retaining it.

Christ's sitting at the right hand of God confirms our faith ; because it gives us a farther proof of our Saviour's divine mission : for, had he not been sent into the world by God, he had not approved of the message Christ delivered to man. His visible ascension into heaven strengthens our hope : for, by seeing our own nature thus advanced, we are assured that dust and ashes may ascend thither also ; the blessed Jesus being our head, we (as members of his body) may expect admission into that heavenly court, where he sits in glory ; since we have his word, which can never fail, that he is gone to prepare a place for us : and it exalts our affections, by reminding us, that our treasure

And its benefit to man.

treasure is above, and that we therefore ought not to set our affections upon such things as must perish in this world; that heaven is the true and only happiness of a christian; and that our great design in this world ought to be, to fit and prepare ourselves for the enjoyment of a blessed eternity; that our constant endeavours ought to tend towards the qualifying ourselves to be received into our Saviour's presence, to whom we have the greatest obligations of gratitude and duty; that, by trampling upon our sins and subduing the lusts of the flesh, we may make our conversation correspond to our Saviour's condition: to the end that where the eyes of the apostles were forced to leave him, thither our thoughts may follow him, even into the highest heavens. We hence should also learn, to have an assurance of the pardon of our sins, of the acceptance of our sincere though imperfect obedience, and of protection and defence in our spiritual warfare; as knowing, that at last we shall be more than conquerors: and it should raise in us a noble ambition of being made partakers of that glory, to which Christ our head already is advanced; who has promised, that to him, who overcometh, he will grant to sit with him in his throne.

VII. When we profess, in the *seventh* ARTICLE of our belief, that CHRIST will come again to judge the quick and the dead; we declare, that we stedfastly believe, that our Lord Jesus Christ shall at the end of the world descend from heaven in his human nature. As to the manner and the circumstances of Christ's coming: He shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels; he shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, with the trump of God; he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and in that of his holy angels; he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him; and he shall separate them, the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: those, who sleep in the grave, shall awake, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; and they, who are alive shall be changed, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This sufficiently shews the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who shall

Sund. 4.] *Of Christ's coming to Judgment.* 111

shall then come glorious, in the brightness and splendor of his celestial body ; supported by the authority (which his Father hath committed to him) of universal judge ; accompanied with thousands of holy angels, who shall attend, not only to make up the pomp of his appearance, but as ministers of his justice; and seated, in that bright throne of glory, from which he shall summon all mankind to appear before his dreadful tribunal ; where they shall come upon their trial, and have all their actions strictly examined.

Concerning the certainty of this, if we search the scriptures ; we shall there find, God hath given assurance unto all men, that he will judge the world by Jesus Christ, in that he hath raised himself from the dead : and the method, by which God will proceed with his creatures in that day, is fully described by the judge himself in his gospel. The apostle of the Gentiles expressly declares, ' We must all appear, and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ : ' and the apostle of the circumcision says, ' The day of the Lord shall come ; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. ' *Proved by scripture.*

The administration of judgment on that day is committed, by the Father, to his Son Jesus Christ, ' God will judge the world in righteousness, by that man Christ Jesus, whom he hath ordained : the Son of man shall come, in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels ; and then shall he reward every man, according to his works ; for, the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. ' Christ commanded his disciples, to preach unto the people, and to testify ; " that it is he, which is ordained of God, to be the judge of quick and dead : " and the tribunal is called the judgment-seat of Christ. Hence observe, that, though the right of judging us belong to God, whose servants and subjects we are ; yet the execution of his power, of judging the world, is particularly committed to the Son of man : because all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father ; that our blessed Saviour might receive public honour in that

nature, wherein he suffered ; that he, who for our sakes stood before an earthly tribunal, might therefore be constituted judge of the whole world ; that he, who was despised and rejected of men, might appear in the glory of his Father, attended with an innumerable train of holy angels ; that he, who was condemned and crucified to absolve us, might receive authority to absolve and condemn the whole race of mankind ; and because, being clothed with an human body, he will make a visible appearance, suitable to the other circumstances of that great day : and all this will be performed in the sight of all the world. Again, the judging mankind by one of their own nature, a man like themselves, touched with a feeling of their infirmities, greatly declares the equity of the judgment ; because he understands all our circumstances, and whatever may influence our case, to lessen or encrease our crimes.

Not only men, but angels also, will be judged at the last day : the fallen angels are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. *To judge angels and men.* The apostle says, ' Know ye not that we shall judge angels ; or, sit with Christ, and approve that sentence against them, which he shall then pronounce ? ' And all men, who have ever lived in the world ; and those, who shall be alive at our Saviour's coming, shall be gathered before him, who is ordained by God to be judge of quick and dead : and they shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, both small and great. Neither riches, power, nor honour, shall deliver any great man from the hand of God ; neither shall the poorest slave be excused, for his meanness ; for they are all the works of his hands : neither will we have regard, to such qualities and circumstances of persons, as do not appertain to the merits of the cause ; passing judgment upon all, according to all things we have done in the body, whether they be good or evil.

He will enter into a severe scrutiny with us ; and enquire, how we have employed all those talents, wherewith he hath entrusted us. *In what manner.* Then shall all the powers and faculties, which have been given us ; all the favours and benefits, we have enjoyed ; all the means and opportunities, which

Sund. 4.] *Of Christ's coming to Judgment.* 113

which have been afforded us, for the living virtuously and holily, and thereby to bring honour and glory to our Master; be brought into our view, and an account be demanded of them. He will account with us for our senses; how we have employed them; whether, to the purposes they were given us for, the furnishing our understandings, and the right governing of our bodies; or whether we have made them, only instruments of sin, and inlets to vanity. He will account with us, for our reason and conscience; whether we have done our best, to improve them; and whether we have used them, as faithful guides of our actions; or have suffered them, to be abused with folly and false principles, and to be led captive by our lusts and passions. He will call us to account, for our memory: whether we have been careful, to treasure up in it such things, as might be useful to our lives; or have only made it the repository of things idle, impertinent, and unprofitable. He will call us to account, for the manner, wherein we have spent our time in this world: whether we have employed it to good purposes, in an honest laborious pursuit of a lawful calling, setting a due portion thereof apart for the more immediate service of God, and spending the remainder innocently and wisely; or whether we have squandered it away, in idleness, in play, in revelling, or in impertinent, vicious conversation, to the neglect of our main business. He will call us to account, for the good creatures he hath from time to time bestowed upon us for our support and refreshment: whether we have used them thankfully and soberly, with temperance and moderation; or whether we have abused them to luxury and excess, to gluttony or drunkenness, making therewith provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lust thereof. He will call us to account, for our learning and intellectual accomplishments, and the advantages of our education; for our health and strength, for our wealth and riches; for our greatness, power, and reputation; and for all those special and eminent talents, wherewith he hath entrusted us above others: whether we have made them instruments of doing a great deal of good, and of being eminently useful in our generation; or whether they have only ministered to pride, vanity, and self-pleasing,

if not to the worse purposes of vice and wickedness. Lastly, he will call us to account, for all the opportunities of grace and the means of salvation, which we have enjoyed; for all the good counsels and wise exhortations, which have been given us; for the revelation of his Son, and the use of his word and sacraments; for all the motions and suggestions of his Holy Spirit within us, dissuading us from sin, and alluring and solliciting us to a course of virtue and holiness; for all these, he will call us to account; whether we have improved them (as we should) to the purposes, for which they were given; whether we have grown in grace, and brought forth fruit suitable to so many helps and advantages, or have been idle and unprofitable servants. For these, and a great many other things, which we now scarce think of, we shall then be accountable: then shall the wisdom and the justice of the divine providence appear eminently to all the world, in rewarding every man according to his works: then, what the upright man has done, shall be vindicated and approved: and what he has suffered, shall be abundantly made good: every thing shall then be perfectly laid open, and exposed in its true and proper light: plainness and sincerity shall then appear the most perfect beauty; and the craftiness of men, who lie in wait to deceive, be stript of all its colours: all specious pretences, all the methods of deceit, shall then be disclosed before men and angels; and no artifice, no false colours, to conceal the deformity of iniquity, shall then take place. In a word, the ill-designing men of this world shall then with shame be convinced, that upright sincerity, which they despised and derided, is the truest wisdom; and those dishonest arts, which they so highly esteemed, were in reality the merest folly.

Notwithstanding we may collect from scripture, that
Of two judgments. there is a particular judgment to be passed upon all men; forasmuch as good men, when they die, pass into a state of happiness, and bad men into a state of misery: yet all the declarations of our Saviour and his apostles concerning judgment, with the parables relative thereto, plainly refer to the last and general judgment. It is only in that day, the whole man shall be completely happy, or completely miserable; for, in that day it is, the bodies of
 men

men shall be raised: and, as they have been partakers with the soul, either in obeying or offending God: so shall they share, in its rewards and punishments. In that day only can the degrees and measures, of their happiness and misery, be adjusted; for, even after death, the effects of men's good or bad actions may add to their punishment, or encrease their reward, by the good or bad examples they have given, by the foundations they have established for piety and virtue, or by the customs they have introduced to countenance immorality and vice: and, in that day, the reasonableness of God's providence, in relation to the sufferings of good men in this world, will be justified; and his justice cleared, by those severe punishments, which shall be eternally inflicted upon the wicked, who have forsaken the God of their Salvation. This therefore, in a more especial manner, is called *the day of the Lord*.

The exact time of this general judgment being one of those seasons, which the Father has put in his own power; it is not for us to know, or pry into it. 'Of that day and that hour, knoweth no man: no, not the angels, which are in heaven; neither the Son, but the Father.'

*Of the time
of the gene-
ral Judg-
ment.*

One thing, the scripture assures us of; that it shall come suddenly, as a thief in the night; as the flood, upon the old world: or as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, when they were eating and drinking, and suspected nothing. That it is very near to every one of us, is also very evident: because, how many ages soever the world may continue; yet, to every particular person, the time of his own death must determine the conditions, upon which his sentence will depend at the general judgment: therefore, whatever be the time, how near or how distant soever, wherein the world is to end; it is the same thing to us; our particular concern in the general judgment depending entirely on the state, wherein we ourselves leave the world; which we are very sure we must speedily do.

If we consult the light of nature only, it will discover to us an essential difference between good and evil; whence by the common consent of mankind, rewards are affixed to the one, and punishments to the other; and according, as

*A last Judg-
ment rea-
sonable.*

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men govern their actions, in relation to these real differences of good and evil, so are their hopes and their fears in respect to a future state. A virtuous life is attended with present quiet and satisfaction, and with the comfortable hope of a future recompence; whereas the commission of any wicked action, though ever so secret, sits uneasy upon the mind, and fills it with horror: all which would be very unaccountable, without the natural apprehension of future punishments and rewards. This is the reason, why many of the heathens esteemed virtue and honesty dearer, than life with all its advantages; and abhorred villainy and impiety worse, than death itself: Moreover, the dispensations of God's providence towards men in this world are not confined: good men often suffer, even for the sake of righteousness; and bad men as frequently prosper and flourish, and that by the means of their wicked practices: wherefore, to rescue God's proceedings with man, from the imputation of injustice; it seems reasonable, that there should be a future judgment, for a suitable distribution of punishments and rewards.*

Hence we learn, that God will reward and punish us in the next life, in proportion to the good or evil we shall do in this our mortal state: for, in that day, the degrees of good and bad actions will be considered, as well as their nature and quality. To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: he, who soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he, who soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully. So our Saviour plainly teacheth us, by the parable of the talents; that men are rewarded, according to the improvement they make: He, who hath gained ten talents, is made ruler over ten cities; and he, who hath gained five talents, ruler over five cities. The apostle of the Gentiles expressly affirms, the glory of the saints shall be different at the resurrection: and we are informed, from our Saviour's own mouth; that, in the day of judgment, the condition of Tyre and Sidon, of Sodom and Gomorrah, shall be more tole-

* See the Care of the Soul, page 2, &c.

tolerable, than that of impenitent sinners, who have heard and rejected the terms of salvation through Jesus Christ. By which we are instructed, to believe the justice and equity of God's providence, and the reason of the thing; nothing being a greater promoter of piety, than the consideration, that the least service shall not lose its reward; the better any man is, the greater disposition he hath for the enjoyment of God; and the more hardened he is in his wickedness, the more susceptible he is of torment, and treasureth up greater measures of wrath against the day of God's vengeance.

We should therefore govern our lives, with such care and consideration, and such due regard to the measures of our duty, as that we may be able to give up our accounts with joy, and not with grief: we should keep such a strict watch over ourselves, by frequent examination; that our behaviour, in this state of probation and trial, may obtain the favour and acceptance of our judge at his dreadful judgment-seat: we should restrain ourselves, from committing the least sin; because there is none so inconsiderable, as to be over looked at that day of general account for all the world; nor should we encourage ourselves, by the greatest secrecy, to the breach of any of God's holy laws; because all our actions shall be then exposed to public view, and known to the whole world, to our eternal infamy: neither should we be dejected, at the slanders and calumnies of bad men; because our integrity shall then be cleared, by him, who cannot err in the sentence he shall pass on us. But let us improve all those talents, wherewith the providence of God hath entrusted us; because we are but stewards, and must give an account of them all: let us be sincere in all our words and actions; because, in that day, the secrets of all hearts shall be opened: let us avoid all rash judging of others: because he, who judgeth another, shall not escape the judgment of the Almighty: let us abound in such works, as we know will particularly distinguish men at that day, such as feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, &c; because our labour shall not be in vain, in the Lord: and let us be humble, and jealous over our own conduct; because, though we know nothing
What we are taught thereby.
by

by ourselves, we are not thereby justified ; for he, that judgeth us, is the Lord. We should also learn, to reconcile ourselves immediately to God, by a sincere and hearty repentance ; that the terrible day of God's wrath may not find us unprepared to enter into the joy of our Lord.

SUNDAY V.

- I. *Of the Holy Ghost ; his office, and manner of working in us ; our duty to him, and the sin against him.* II. *Of the holy catholic Church, and communion of Saints.* III. *Of the Forgiveness of sins ; when and how to be obtained.* IV. *Of the Resurrection of the body, with answers to objections against it ; and of the folly of Atheism.* V. *Of the Life everlasting ; in which God's justice in punishing the wicked eternally is vindicated, and the inexcusableness of sin is demonstrated.* VI. *The Doctrine of Christianity cannot be amended ; and are not affected by the wickedness of some people's lives, nor by religious disputes.* VII. *That Religion arose not from fear, education, or state policy ; and the miseries of Atheism.*

I. **I**N the eighth ARTICLE of our Christian Faith, we profess to believe in the HOLY GHOST. Christ, before his passion, had promised to send to his disciples the Holy Ghost ; to guide them into all truth, and to shew them things to come, and to glorify him : and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were accordingly all filled with the Holy Ghost. The *Holy Ghost* is the *third Person*, in the most holy Trinity ; of one substance with the Father and the Son, and called the *Spirit* of Christ, and the *Spirit* of the Son, as well as of the Father ; yet distinct from them, as eternally proceeding from both : Holy, in respect of his own divine nature ; for, as the Son was so begotten of the Father, as to be one God with him ; in like manner the Holy Ghost so proceedeth from the Father and the Son, that he is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son ; very and eternal God.* His peculiar office (as we may understand by the title *Holy*) is to sanctify and renew our corrupt nature, and

* See the first Article of the Creed, as explained in Sunday 3, Sect. 1. and also the 5th Article of Religion.

and to restore it to its primitive perfection and dignity ; to incline us to receive those truths, which are only spiritually discerned, and are foolishness to a carnal or natural man ; by opening our hearts, that we may attend to those things, which were written by his inspiration, and spoken by holy men, as they were moved by him : by working in us that faith, which is the gift of God ; and which no one can have, but from the Holy Ghost : and by giving us that new birth or regeneration, without which we cannot see the kingdom of God, nor enjoy the possession of God's promises, reserved for believers in the next world. Consequently it is this blessed Spirit, which gives clearness to our faith, zeal to our charity, and strength and power to every thing we think or do.

Those helps and assistances, which are necessary for the performance of the conditions, on which our salvation depends, are bestowed upon us by this divine Spirit ; partly by illuminating our understandings in our sincere and diligent enquiries after divine truth ; partly by exciting our wills to that which is good, and strengthening our vigorous endeavours in the prosecution thereof : and these are to be obtained, only by the use of those means, which God hath established for this end ; by humble, hearty, and fervent prayer ; by a frequent and devout use, of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, by reading and hearing God's holy word ; with the use of all other likely means to attain those graces, which we seek for at his hands : and all this, as obedient members of the communion of saints ; to whom alone Christ hath promised these influences of the Holy Ghost, which we must feel or know to work in us. When we constantly take care to demean ourselves, as living members of that kingdom, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; our conversation will be in heaven, our delight in God : all our hopes, wishes, and desires, will be fixed on things above ; and we shall live that heavenly life here. the perfection whereof will be our happiness hereafter, in the kingdom of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. For, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are represented to us, as severally, and in a distinct manner, concurring to our salvation : for, God so loved the

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the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son; and, through him, we are admitted by one Spirit to the Father.

We may judge of the necessity of this belief, in that it is taken from the very form of baptism, ordained by Christ himself. Besides, our belief in the Holy Ghost tends to excite in us a desire, of those gifts and graces, which flow from him; of that new birth from him, which may wholly renew and spiritualize our souls: that, being always led by him, and receiving supplies from him, and continually in his holy fellowship; we may through him, become such temples of God, as he will chuse to delight and dwell in. Therefore we ought to endeavour, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God: whose will is our sanctification; and who from the beginning hath chosen us to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit, whom he sent, to teach us his will, and to guide us in the way of truth.

Our duty, therefore, with regard to the Holy Ghost, is to pray to God our Father continually, for the assistance of this his holy Spirit; whereby we may be enabled, to overcome all the temptations of sin. We are to receive his testimony, as is delivered down to us in the writings of the apostles and prophets; to obey his good motions; be solicitous to obtain his gifts and graces, which are the habits of moral and christian virtues; and be careful, above all things, not to quench, and grieve, and drive him from us, lest we be found to do despite unto the spirit of grace. There is one thing, particularly needful, to be here taken notice of: that, to follow the guidance of the holy spirit, is not, to follow enthusiastic imaginations; but to be guided by that doctrine, which the Holy Ghost inspired the apostles to teach; and that we obey it, in the practice of all moral and christian virtues which are the fruits of the spirit. The apostles were directed by a miraculous assistance of the spirit, upon every extraordinary occasion: but we have now no promise, of any such miraculous direction: to obey the spirit now, is to obey his

his dictates, as delivered down to us in the inspired writings; and to be a good man, is now the only evidence of being full of the Holy Ghost.

Every wilful act of sin, especially in a Christian, is, in some sense, a sin against the Holy Ghost: it is (in the scripture language) a grieving, a quenching, a resisting, and doing despite to the Spirit. All sinning therefore, against the clear conviction of our consciences, and the motions and suggestions of God's Holy Spirit to the contrary; all obsti-

Of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

nacy in a vicious course of living, notwithstanding the motives and arguments of the gospel to persuade men to repentance; all profane scoffing at religion, and making a mock of sin; all abuse of the scriptures, and ridiculing the holy word of God; all perverse infidelity, and malicious opposition of the truth, when the arguments for it are very plain and evident to every impartial mind; are crimes of an high nature, and of a near affinity to this great and unpardonable sin: and, though God, to encourage the repentance of men, has not declared them unpardonable; yet, where they once get possession of a man, they by degrees so waste the conscience and corrupt the mind as to make it incurable. They are, in short,, great and grievous provocations to Almighty God; and if they be long persisted in, we know not, how soon he may withdraw his grace from us, and suffer us to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

II. In the *ninth* ARTICLE of our Christian Faith, we profess to believe in *the holy Catholic Church*, *the Communion of Saints*; Because Christ promised to erect a Church, when he said;

Of the holy catholic church.

'On this rock will I build my Church:' and we find it mentioned, as actually erected, in that passage of the *AGS*; 'And the Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved.' The Church consisted at first, of the twelve apostles, and other believers in Christ; continuing in their fellowship, and hearing together the word preached, and breaking bread from house to house, and joining in public prayers to the Almighty. As many therefore, as embrace and obey the gospel, may be said to compose one church, in respect of their being members of the same body,

Of whom composed.

and through one and the same spirit united unto one head, which is Christ; built upon one foundation, the chief corner-stone whereof is Christ Jesus; professing that holy faith, which is but one; and receiving the same sacraments, which are signs and badges of the people of God; whereby we being many, are united by one baptism, and are one bread and one body: We are also one, as being all called, in one hope of our calling; and we ought also to be one, as keeping the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace; and as united by one discipline and government, and guided by the same pastors into the way of eternal life.

Howsoever the unity of the visible Church, through the weakness or perverseness of man, or the wiles of the devil, may be defective in these last respects: yet all true and sincere believers are, and always have been, and ever shall be, led by him (the only good shepherd, their eternal high-priest, king, and prophet) unto those heavenly mansions; where joy, peace, love, harmony, unity, happiness and glory, shall have no end. Moreover, it is reasonable to believe, this one church hath a present existence, hath continued from the times of the apostles, and will continue to the end of the world; from those promises of our Lord, 'that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and 'that he will be with his disciples always, even unto the 'end of the world.'

The Christian Church also may be well termed *Holy*; as being separated from the rest of the world, by an holy calling; having administered among them Holy offices, instituted by God; being more particularly obliged, by naming themselves by the name of Christ, to depart from iniquity, and to obtain that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord: and lastly, in that its members are predestinate, to be conformed to the image of Christ; are efficaciously called by God, elect, sanctified, and justified; and shall be perfectly holy, when they die.

The primitive fathers at first understood, by the Catholic Church, no more, than the church in general, as composed of all particular churches. Therefore we call the epistles of
Is catholic,
or universal.

of Peter, catholic ; because they were directed, to the church in general : and thus, in succeeding ages, they called those places of divine worship, wherein all persons of both sexes met without distinction within a certain district, Catholic Churches ; in opposition to such private chapels, as were erected by monks and friars. Again, the word Catholic is sometimes applied, to particular national churches, as professing the true faith with the rest of the church of God ; in opposition to schismatics and hereticks. Besides, the Christian Church may be also called Catholic ; as it is to be diffused into, and at last to take in all nations ; and is not confined to one nation, as the Jewish religion was ; nor to one place, as the Jewish sacrifices and other priestly ministrations were.

To this church it is, that we believe, God hath added, and will continue to add, those, who shall be saved : and as none were saved from the flood, but those only who were in the ark of Noah ; so we have no reason to think, that any shall be saved from the wrath of the last day, and receive the glory promised to the saints, who were not found within the christian church*. We ought therefore to take the greatest care, that we be not excluded from it ; either by justly incurring its censures by scandalous and incorrigible sins, or by falling into apostasy, heresy, or schism : we ought also to remember, that, as this church is holy, it will be impossible for us to be living members of it, unless we also be holy, without which, our being outward members of it will be, not only vain, but pernicious, and the highest aggravation of our crime ; because the catholic church is the *Communion of Saints*.

The larger sense of the word *Saints* implies all those persons, who are baptized into and profess the christian faith, and are visible members of Christ's church. As the wheat grows in the same field with the tares ; so the Saint hath an external communion, in the same Church with the hypocrite : both are baptized, with the same water ; and eat at the same table, the bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received : they hear the same doctrine, and openly profess the same faith : but they do not

*Is a state of
salvation.*

*Of the com-
munion of
Saints.*

* See this explained under baptism, Sunday 2. Sect. vii.

municate the same saving grace ; nor in that faith, which works by love ; nor in the renovation, of the mind and spirit of sinful man. Whenever we profess this belief therefore, of the *Communion of Saints* ; it ought *Its influence.* to excite us, to endeavour after the greatest purity and sanctity of life, we can possibly attain : because we must turn, from the power of Satan unto God ; or we can have no inheritance among them, who are sanctified in Christ Jesus. Moreover, this profession ought also to excite, in all true believers, the highest gratitude to God ; who hath admitted them, to fellowship with himself : hath made them partakers of the divine nature ; and hath chosen them, for the places of his abode and the mansions of eternal bliss. Besides, this profession ought also to enflame all true believers, with the highest affection towards one another ; for, if it be natural, to have a brotherly love for our brothers and sisters according to the flesh ; how much more ought we to have the highest affection for those, who are joined to us by a much nobler relation ; who are born again by the same spiritual birth with us, and live the same spiritual life, and are endued with the gracious influences of the same Holy Spirit ? Therefore, if we ought to do good to all men ; much more so (surely) to those, who are of the same household of faith, saints or members of the same communion, and partakers of the same privileges, advantages, and promises with ourselves.

III. In the *tenth* ARTICLE of our Christian Faith, we profess a belief of the *Forgiveness of Sins* : It will be necessary therefore, to enquire into the nature of Sin. *Sin* is the suffering the mind, to be drawn away, by the enticement of some appetite, passion, or interest, to do, what (we are sensible) is not in itself fit and right ; to do, what the mind feels to be contrary to the law of God, made known either by reason or revelation ; contrary to piety and godliness, sobriety and temperance ; contrary to truth, justice, equity, or charity. Hence Sin, in its own nature (even separate from the consideration, of its being an obstinate disobedience to the revealed will of God) is utterly unreasonable and inexcusable ; it is acting, in opposition to the known reason and pro-

propriety of things; contrary to that eternal order and equity, which God has established in the original constitution of nature, opposite to the light of reason, the dictates of conscience, the unprejudiced judgment of our own minds, the agreeing opinion of all wise and good men, nay and even of bad men themselves too; contrary to all our natural notions and apprehensions of the attributes and will of God; destructive of the public welfare and happiness of mankind, the health of our own bodies, the peace of our minds, and the support of our good name and reputation amongst wise and reasonable men: it is subjecting our reason to vile affections, to inordinate and brutish appetites, to disorderly and ungoverned passions; which becomes a guilt, or a debt, to suffer such punishment as the iniquity of the offence deserves from the law-giver; which punishment could never be forgiven, but through the satisfaction of Christ.

That our sins are forgiven on account of the satisfaction offered by Christ, is plainly proved from many texts of scripture; which relate to this matter, and tell us, that 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission;' and that, 'In the *Forgiven through Christ.*

'end of the world, Christ once appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; by his stripes we are healed; his blood was shed for many, for the remission of sin; we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin; according to the riches of his grace.' This cannot be any way inconsistent with those scriptures, which make the love of God to men the inducement of his sending Christ into the world: He loved and pitied them, as his creatures, and in misery; and was offended at them, as sinners; and it was a mercy worthy himself, to find for them a sacrifice equal to his infinite justice and holiness.

The great consolation of a Christian centers therefore, in the assurance, that our sins are blotted out by the merits of Christ: for all have sinned, *Is a christian's comfort.* and come short of the glory of God; nay, God hath concluded all under sin; and, unless he himself had shewn us a way to happiness, we must for ever have remained under perplexities, from the sense of our guilt and the fear of divine wrath. On the contrary, this

doctrine, of forgiveness of sins, gives all believers the highest comfort, and the greatest sense of the goodness of God ; who has thus reconciled mercy to justice, and has freely released those debts, we never should have been able to have paid, to the offended Deity. We should, by these considerations, be enflamed, with the most exalted love of our heavenly Father, who has given his Son to die for us : this should raise in us the highest gratitude to the blessed Jesus, who became the Son of man, to make us the childrer of God ; and should make us always remember that we are no longer our own, but are bought with a price, no less than the blood of Jesus. Yet Christ delivers no man from the punishment of sin, who is not

When it is first delivered from the service and dominion
effectual. of it : no man therefore, who continues in the service and dominion of sin, can expect to be delivered from the punishment thereof. Christ has indeed given himself a propitiatory sacrifice, a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation, for the sins of the world : but not, that the whole world, or any particular persons, should absolutely and unconditionally be thereby excused, from the punishment of sin ; but, that all those, who by true repentance turn from sin, and become righteous, should obtain remission and reconciliation with God : for, he died, not that he might indulge men in sin, but that he might save them from it. Christ has indeed brought life and immortality to light, and opened an entrance into the kingdom of God : but not, that any unreformed and unrenewed nature should be made partaker of that spiritual happiness, or be admitted to have a share in those pure and undefiled rewards ; but, that those, who have broken off their sins by repentance, and their iniquities by righteousness, should be entertained at the eternal supper of the Lamb. As impossible as it is for God, to cease to be holy ; or for the purity of the divine nature, to be reconciled to sin : so impossible it is for a wicked man, to obtain remission, whilst he continues wicked ; or for a sinner, to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. ‘ Be not deceived,’ saith St. Paul ; ‘ neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor

Sund. 5.] *Of the Resurrection of the Body.* 127

‘ nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners (that is, no unrighteous person, who continues in the practice of any known sin) shall inherit the kingdom of God.’ 1 Cor. vi. 2. Wherefore, as God has promised us the forgiveness of our sins on none other condition, but that of our sincere faith and repentance, and our forgiving the trespasses of our brethren against us ; we must endeavour daily, to die unto sin, that we may live unto God : and, as we expect forgiveness ourselves, we must be ready to forgive one another.

SUNDAY V. PART II.

IV. In the *eleventh* ARTICLE of our Christian Faith, we profess a belief of the *Resurrection of the Body* ; which we must believe as a necessary and infallible truth : for, as it is appointed for all men, once to die ; so it is also determined, that all men should rise from death : a doctrine perfectly agreeable to right reason, and to our natural notions of the attributes of God. The generality of the heathens of old, and the infidels of latter times, make this, one of their great objections against christianity, upon the pretence of its impossibility. The heathens think it, contrary to the course of nature ; that any thing should return, from a state of perfect corruption, to its proper form ; or that a body, perfectly dead, should be again restored to life. It is true, that, among the works of nature, they could never observe any action or operation, which did or could produce such an effect ; so that, by natural light, we cannot discover, that God will raise the dead ; for, that depending upon the will of God, it can be no otherways known, than by his own declarations : yet this doctrine, when made known by revelation, evidently contains nothing in it contrary to right reason. For we are to consider the possibility of things, not so much depending upon the power of nature, as upon the power of the God of nature.

Of the resurrection of the same body.

Why opposed by infidels.

Whatever dark or imperfect notions the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, had of a future state ; it is certain, Life and immortality is now brought to light by the gospel : and we may rest assured, that

Its certainty.

(though,

though, when we die, our bodies shall be laid in the cold chambers of the grave, and there become the food of worms, and moulder into dust and rottenness) yet it will not be long, before this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality: for God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead: a day wherein we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad: then all, who are in their graves, shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they, that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they, that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. It may be

Proved by reason. proved, by the creation of the world out of nothing, that it is altogether as easy for God, to raise the body again after death, as to create and form it at first: it is a less effect of power, to raise a body, when resolved into dust, or where-soever dispersed and destroyed; than to make all things out of nothing, by a single command.

I know, there is a popular Objection, which at first view may carry some difficulty in it, against this Article of our Faith. 'How can bodies, devoured by men, who live on human flesh; or bodies, eaten by fishes, and turned to their nourishment; which fishes, are afterwards eaten by men, and converted into the substance of their bodies: how can such bodies be recovered, at the resurrection of the dead?' To clear this difficulty, among

Answered by reason. many other sufficient proofs, it must be considered; that the body of man is none other, than a successive thing; continually losing something of the matter it had before, and gaining new: so that it is certain from experience, that men frequently change their bodies; and that the body, a man hath at any time of his life, is as much his own body, as that he hath, when death separates body and soul. If therefore the matter of the body, which a man hath at any time of his life, be raised; it is as much his own, and the same body,

Sund. 5.] *Of the Resurrection of the Body.* 129

body, as that he had at his death : which clearly solves the forementioned difficulty ; since any of those bodies, he had at any time before he was eaten, are as much his own, as that which was eaten. Moreover, let it be considered ; that, in like manner, as in every grain of corn there is contained a small imperceptible seed, or natural faculty ; which is itself the entire future blade and ear, and in due season (when all the rest of the grain is corrupted) unfolds itself visibly into the form : so our present mortal and corruptible body may be (as it were) but the out-coat of some hidden, and at present imperceptible, part of nature ; which, at the resurrection, shall discover itself in its proper form : by which way also, in nature, there cannot possibly be any confusion of bodies. It is not without some weight, therefore, that St. Paul made use of the same comparison ; and that the same similitude is alledged, by the ancient Fathers of the church. Would we but consider (as we ought) all things without us ; the natural changes and chances in every thing and person will shew the probability of our resurrection from the dead. Day dies at night, and rises with the next morning : summer dies into winter, when the earth becomes a general sepulchre : but, when spring appears, nature revives and flourishes the corn lies buried in the ground ; and, being corrupted, revives and multiplies : and can we think, that man (the lord of all these things, which die and revive for him) will be kept under the bands of death, never to rise again ? Though the resurrection appeared impossible, to many of the heathens ; yet some of the wisest of them have thought otherwise, as their works declare. At the Resurrection, every man shall be as really and truly the same person that died ; as he, who awakes in the morning, is the same person, who went to sleep at night.

If we search the scriptures, we shall find plainly, the resurrection of the body is clear, from divine revelation. God hath not only promised *In the Old Testament.* it, but in several instances exemplified it, for our satisfaction. ' I know, (says Job) that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and, though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,' &c.

And the prophet Daniel tells us, that ' many of them, ' that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake ; some ' to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting ' contempt.' But, if these proofs will not take place,

By facts.

let them hearken unto fact. The ears of the Lord were open to the voice of Elijah, for the dead child of the widow of Serepta : for, when he prayed, the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. Elisha raised the child of the Shunamite from death : nor did that power die with him ; for, when they were burying a dead man, they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha ; and, when the man was let down and touched the body of Elisha, he revived and stood upon his feet.

If we search the Gospels, we shall find that remarkable argument of Christ himself, when he *In the New Testament.* put the Sadduces to silence : ' As touching ' the Resurrection of the dead, have ye not ' read that, which was spoken unto you by God, saying ; " I am the God of Abraham, and the God of " Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? " ' God is not the God ' of the dead, but of the living.' If this do not also astonish and silence the Infidels and Socinians of our days ; they must be accounted more hardened in their unbelief, than the Sadducees of old ; who could not reply, to so cogent a proof of the Resurrection. Again ; he cautions his disciples to fear him, who can destroy both body and soul in hell. If then the body be capable of torment in hell, it must be raised from the grave, and united to its soul again ; before it can pass, from the grave, to that state of punishment. He promises a recompence, at the Resurrection of the just, to those, who relieve the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame : He positively declares in St. John, that the hour is coming, in which, all, that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they, that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they, that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation : He calls himself the Resurrection and the life : we are told in the Revelation, that ' the sea shall give up the dead, that are in it ; and ' death and the grave deliver up the dead, which are in ' them ;

Sund. 5.] *Of the Resurrection of the Body.* 131

'them; that they may be judged, every man according to his works:' and St. Paul, defending himself before the Roman governor, openly professes his belief of the Resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. To some of the philosophers, this apostle appeared to be a setter-forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them: Jesus and the Resurrection: he declares, that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad; and that the Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body. He describes to the Thessalonians, the manner of the Resurrection; that the dead in Christ shall rise first: and argues with the Corinthians from the certainty of Christ's Resurrection, to the necessity of ours. These texts sufficiently prove, that the Resurrection of the body was delivered, as a necessary article of faith, from the beginning of christianity; and that it is still the expectation of the faithful: for, if the dead rise not, christians are of all men most miserable. This doctrine was confirmed

By facts.

by our Saviour's restoring to life the ruler of the Synagogue's daughter; by raising up the widow's only son, who was dead; and by restoring to life his friend Lazarus, who had been dead and buried four days: but all these instances were exceeded, by our Saviour's own resurrection, which so infinitely manifested his power and divinity. There can be no doubt then, of the truth of a Resurrection from the dead; and it is certain this Resurrection will be universal: all mankind, who have laid down their own bodies and committed them to the grave, shall receive them again; and there shall be a Resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

Its certainty and universality.

From what has been said, it appears; that the folly of those, who have none other hope to rest upon, but that of atheism and infidelity, is greater, than can be expressed in words, or rightly conceived by any imagination. What is the state of such a person, when God taketh away his soul? Can

The folly of atheism.

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he be sure, there is no God? Can he demonstrate to himself, that there will be no future state; The hardiest unbeliever never yet pretended, to have demonstration in this case: and if he had, all the comfort, all the hope, that can be built upon that, would be but the hope of a beast; the expectation of perishing, as if he had never been. When God (or, as he would say, fate or chance) taketh away his life; on what ground can the confidence of the atheist rely? His expectations are thin, as a spider's web; his hopes are as the light chaff, which the wind scattered away from the face of the earth: his prosperity and mirth can be, but for a moment; and his adversity must of necessity terminate in despair: for, what relief is to be expected, from fate or chance, which has no understanding? Of what support, in the day of affliction, is that man capable; who does not believe, things are guided by a wise hand, which can turn every thing finally to our advantage?

The bodies of good christians, now liable to pains and diseases and death, shall then die no more, but shall be equal unto the angels: they shall become immortal, like them; and consequently be freed from all those troublesome accidents, to which they are now exposed: for, the reward being eternal, the subject of it must be eternal also. Therefore, says the Apostle, 'It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:' the bodies of good men, though now vile and corruptible, by nature subject to filth and deformity, shall be raised glorious, splendid, and bright: they shall shine, like the sun; and shall be fashioned, like to the glorious body of our blessed Saviour: though now subject to weariness, to impotency, and to decay; they shall be raised nimble, strong, and active; they shall be able to follow the Lamb, wherever he goeth; they shall be endowed with such strength and vigour, as shall support them for ever in the same state, without any decay or change. 'It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:' though now actuated by vital spirits, it shall then be possessed and actuated by the Holy Spirit; it shall be refined, and become a proper instrument for the operations of our minds, upon whom they must serve and depend.

‘sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.’ Yet the bodies of the wicked will be fitted to that eternal punishment, which they have drawn upon themselves; wherein they will always suffer, without consuming, under that dreadful sentence; ‘Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!’

This faith of the resurrection of the body should make us reverence ourselves, and not pollute our bodies with sensual and brutish lusts; but, by purity and sobriety, prepare them for that honour and happiness they are designed for: it should support us, under those miseries and infirmities our bodies are subject to in this life; since when we take them up again, they shall be no more liable to pains, diseases, or dissolution; for death will be swallowed up in victory. By this faith also we are comforted, upon the death of our religious friends and relations; who are not perished, but fallen asleep, and shall awake again in greater perfection and glory at the last day. This should influence us, to promote not only our own salvation, but the improvement of saving knowledge, as far as it lies in our power; and to curb vice and encourage virtue, especially among those, with whom we have any friendship or authority: it should arm us also, against the fear of our own death; since we are assured, that, after our bodies are crumbled into dust, and become the food of worms, they shall be quickened at the general resurrection; shall be changed, and made glorified bodies, by the promise and mighty power of God: and, above all, this should make us exercise ourselves, to keep consciences void of offence, both towards God and man; that we may not forfeit that blessed immortality of our whole man, body and soul, which our blessed Saviour hath promised to all those, who persevere in his service all the days of their mortal life.

V. In the *twelfth* ARTICLE of our Christian Faith, we profess to believe, that there is a *Life everlasting*; a life of everlasting duration, to which all shall be raised after death, the wicked as well as the righteous. When we read therefore, that the wicked shall be destroyed and perish and die for ever;

we

*Misery to
the wicked.*

*How it
ought to in-
fluence us.*

*Of the life
everlasting.*

we are to understand, not that they shall be turned into nothing, but that they shall for ever lose the presence and favour of God; be condemned to a wretched, hopeless state of anguish, remorse, and despair; and be tortured with the worm that never dies, and in the fire that shall never be put out. But the righteous shall receive the utmost perfection, of which their nature is capable: they shall partake of the glory, which the Father has given to the Son; and shall be one, as the Father and Christ are one. The life and immortality, which Christ hath brought to light, and which he hath promised to all his faithful disciples, is a translation from a state of dulness and anxiety, trouble, affliction, disappointments, vexations, real grief, solid cares, and at the best but of imaginary pleasures, to a state of true happiness and content, of manly and rational pleasures; pleasures, not interrupted by sickness or any sad accidents; not dull'd, by being weary of them, or cloy'd by them; not disturbed, either by the insults of our enemies, or the concernments for our miserable friends, or our own inequality of temper. In that state, all the powers and faculties of our souls will be advanced to the highest perfection they are capable of; and we shall live in perfect ease and peace, in perfect freedom and liberty, in a perfect enjoyment of ourselves: then our bodies, which slept in the dust, shall be raised again and united to our souls, to live in the city of the great King, the heavenly Jerusalem, a paradise of pleasure, a country of perpetual light and bliss; where the glory of the Lord fills the place, and where every object, which presents itself, adds a new beauty to it, and contributes to the increase of our delight. To complete the whole; we are assured, the inheritance we expect is incorruptible, and fadeth not away; our house in heaven is eternal; and death shall have no more power over us.

There is no dispute, concerning the everlasting happiness of the righteous; it being evident, that God in his infinite bounty may reward the sincere obedience of his creatures, as much beyond the merit of their own weak and imperfect works, as he sees proper: yet the everlasting punishment, threatened to the wicked,

Sund. 5.] *Reasons for eternal Punishment.* 135

wicked, has seemed to many a great difficulty ; since it is certain, from our natural notions of the attributes of God, that no man shall be punished beyond the just demerit of his transgression. But those, who consider the nature of human actions, must confess, that God is just, and that every one, who wilfully offends him, deserves eternal punishment : because a rational and moral man not only has in himself a power of acting, which is in common to him with the irrational creatures ; but he has moreover a still higher principle or power of directing his actions, with some determinate views, and to some certain and constant end. He has a power of judging before-hand, concerning the consequences of his actions, concerning the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the end he aims at ; and he has a power of recollecting, after the action is done, whether he acted with a good or an evil view : He can either follow the regular motions of all his appetites and passions, as the beasts, that perish ; or he can restrain and over-rule their solicitation, by attending to the guidance of the superior light of reason and religion. Nay, a man cannot indeed, but have some view and design, in every thing he does : even when he abandons himself most implicitly to the brutal guidance of mere appetite and passion, he does it still with some view ; and with a consciousness, which beasts have not, that he knowingly and deliberately chuses to aim at some mean and unworthy end.

God's justice vindicated in punishing the wicked eternally.

Because man sins wilfully.

Hence arises that judgment of reflection, which we call *Conscience* : by which, a man either approves or condemns his own past actions ; and apprehends, that he shall accordingly be approved or condemned by him also, to whom he must finally give an account of himself. If a man, in the general course of his life, accustom himself to consider those things before-hand ; that is, if he behave himself, as a rational creature ; if he accustom himself in all his actions, to consider the reason and equity of things ; to consider, what is reasonable for himself to do, or for him to expect should be done by another ; to consider what

Against his conscience.

is agreeable to the will of God, and likely to be approved at the bar of an impartial and all-seeing Judge: if this (I say) be his main directing principle, the point he constantly keeps in view; his actions, generally speaking, will not fail to be virtuous and good. On the contrary, if a man's principles be loose and atheistical; if he have

The case of no sense of the reason and equity of things, *atheists.* nor apprehension of the righteous judgment of God; if his views be none other than the satisfying of his appetites, the gratification of his passions, the pursuing his present interest, and pleasing his own unreasonable self-will: it cannot be, but his actions will be generally immoral and vicious.

As there never was any person, in any age or country upon earth, but judged himself injured by any violence or fraud put by another upon himself; the case is precisely the same, *All wicked men are self-condemned.* whenever any fraud or violence is used by him towards another: therefore the judgment passed by him, in that case, upon other men, is in fact a judgment passed by him upon himself. The same may be said, concerning any other known instance of wickedness, concerning every kind of impiety, unrighteousness, or debauchery: The person, who commits the crime, always condemns himself; and is conscious, that he deserves to be punished. Men may divert and turn away their thoughts from the unpleasing subject, by variety of amusements, and numberless vain imaginations: they may flatter themselves as they like, with objections against the unalterable and essential difference of virtue and vice; and resolve to say within themselves, though they can never really be persuaded of it, 'that they shall have peace, though they walk in the imagination of their own hearts, and add one sin to another:' they may confidently and presumptuously dispute and argue in general, 'that all actions are naturally and originally alike; that morality is but a fiction of speculative men; and the notion of vice and virtue only a creature of the laws or customs of nations:' But the judgment in particular, which every wicked man necessarily and immediately makes concerning any unjust action of another, by which he himself
hap-

Sund. 5.] *Reasons for eternal Punishment.* 137

happens to suffer, will for ever convict him of knowing well that difference of moral good and evil ; which he is not willing to acknowledge, or which (however) he is not willing to make the rule of his own behaviour. This is, what the apostle calls the law written in men's hearts ; by which they are a law unto themselves, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or excusing one another : it is certain therefore, men are naturally conscious of the difference of good and evil, and of the consequent desert of their own actions : it is natural for them to apprehend, this judgment of their own consciences is the judgment God also passes upon them ; and the scripture very clearly affirms that it is so.

The sense of guilt is so necessarily uneasy, upon the mind of man ; that even the most hardened sinners are perpetually endeavouring, to shift off the blame of their wickedness from themselves ; and to throw the fault upon whatever comes in their way. Sometimes the reason they alledge for their wickedness, is, that God has not made them better than they are. and, ' who has resisted his will ?' Sometimes it is the devil, that tempts them ; and ' how can frail man withstand ' so potent and so cunning a deceiver ?' Sometimes it is the original corruption of their nature : and, ' who ' can alter the condition, to which he was born ;' Sometimes it is the general fashion and custom of the world : and, who can be singular in opposing ' so violent a ' torrent ?' The apostle cuts off at once both these and all other excuses, by determining distinctly ; that, whatever aggravations or extenuations of sin may (or may not) arise, from external circumstances ; yet the nature and essence of sin consist entirely, in the free choice of a man's own will ; and his guilt is always just so much, in proportion, as his choice deviates from the dictates of his reason : for, though the sensibility of our conscience, whereby we become uneasy at the commission of any crime, may be deadened by a long perseverance in vice ; yet the light of our conscience, whereby we discern the difference

Their excuses for sinning are vain.

The nature of sin.

rence between good and evil, can never perhaps be totally put out. This we may do, and this (if we be wise) we will do: We may, by repeated endeavours, by degrees subdue our vicious inclinations to our reason.

Let it be observed therefore; first, that no man can say, it is unreasonable, that they, who (by wilful and stubborn disobedience to their almighty Creator and most merciful Benefactor, and by the habitual practice of unrepented wickedness) have, during the state of trial, made themselves unfit for the enjoyment of that happiness, which God has prepared for them that love and obey him, should be eternally rejected and excluded from it. As to the continuance of this punishment; no man can presume, in our present state of ignorance and darkness, to be able truly to judge, barely by the strength of his own natural reason; what is, or is not, in this respect, consistent with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the supreme Governor of the world; since we neither know the place, nor kind, nor manner, nor circumstances, nor degrees, nor all the ends and uses of the final punishment of wicked men. But we are certain the justice of God will abundantly vindicate itself; and all mouths shall be stopped before him, and be forced to acknowledge the exact righteousness of all his judgments, and condemn their own folly and wickedness: forasmuch, as the degrees or severity of the punishment, which shall be inflicted on the impenitent, shall be exactly proportionate to their sins, as a recompence of their crime; so that no man shall suffer more, than he has deserved, by the evil of his ways. Should it (for argument sake) be granted, that men are to live here for ever; and that some of them become abandoned and incorrigibly bad; would it be any unjustifiable severity, to confine them for ever in prison, that they might not seduce or annoy the rest of the creation: or even to inflict positive punishments upon them in their confinement, adequate to their offences, in order to deter others? In like manner, let us suppose, that the soul is in its own nature designed for an immortal

Sund. 5.] *The Influence of eternal Punishment.* 139

tal duration; that those, who are consigned to everlasting misery, are such, as by a continued course of sinning have so disabled all the powers of the soul, that it is morally impossible for them (without the extraordinary grace of God) to cease from sinning: if it be no injustice then, as undoubtedly it is not, that every sinner should be a sufferer; it can be no injustice, that every habitual, eternal sinner should be an eternal sufferer. Suppose again, the outward acts of sin are temporary; yet the defilement and habit, contracted by a repetition of these acts, are (if we die in a state of impenitence) eternal: and, as eternal ill habits are the source of eternal torments; it will follow, that the impenitent have entailed upon themselves everlasting misery.

Lest those then, who insist so much upon it, that the punishment is disproportioned to the crime, consider sin, in all views and in all its consequences; which is the only way, to form a true judgment of the malignity of it: for the punishment is not disproportionate to sin, habitual sin, if considered with all its numerous train of ill consequences; the consequences being such, that if unrestrained, it would soon involve the whole world in one promiscuous ruin and desolation. It is true, one man cannot do all this mischief: but one man, who (for instance) acts unjustly, contributes his part to the introduction of universal disorder and misery. If all should act unjustly as himself, (and all have as much right, as any one man) the foundations of the moral world would be quite out of course. If (as a late writer observes) 'one person rob another of a small sum of money, and be taken, and suffer death for the fact: what proportion is there, between the punishment and the crime; between depriving a man, of what he perhaps could very well spare; and depriving the person who did it, of his life, of his all in this world? None at all, if we consider the crime in this light only; but, if we consider it in all its tendencies, then the crime is adequate to the punishment; since it tends, to render property and what is valuable in this life, precarious; and to subvert the peace of society.' We know not, we cannot know, how far the

the consequence of any one sin may extend ; how far the influence of our behaviour may affect all, who lie within the sphere of our activity ; those beneath us, and about us, our domesticks, relations, and neighbours ; and these again may spread the contagion farther.

This faith, therefore, in a *Life everlasting*, should deter us from sin, and excite us to repentance and holiness of life ; and breed in us an awe of the great God, a jealous God, a consuming fire ; a God, who will not be mocked : it should teach us, to tremble at

*How we
should be
influenced
thereby.*

his word, at the fierceness of his wrath, and the dreadfulfulness of his vengeance ; and to set the highest value, on the plenteous redemption wrought out for us by the blood of Christ, whereby all true believers are purged from their sins ; and not only freed from eternal misery, but made inheritors of eternal happiness : it should enflame our souls with earnest desires of those heavenly joys, which flow from the vision of God ; and stir up our endeavours after that holiness, without which it can be enjoyed by no man : it should teach us, to contemn this world, and to set our affections on things above ; so that, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we may press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ ; it should encourage us, to take up the cross of Christ, and make us chearful under the sufferings of this life ; knowing that they are not worthy to be compared to the glory, which shall be revealed in us ; and that our light afflictions, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Hearken not therefore, to the suggestions of designing men. Under a pretence of banishing your apprehensions of a future judgment, they will only dash your hopes, and weaken your expectations of a blessed immortality ; alarming those very apprehensions, which they promised to remove, by adding to your other terrors this new fear, which will continually haunt you ; a fear, lest you have sinned in dismissing your first persuasion for very slight and frivolous reasons.

VI. There

VI. There may be several, who have just sense enough to see, there are difficulties in christianity ; but not sense enough to see, they are but difficulties : these are confirmed infidels, mere reeds shaken with the wind, with every blast of vain doctrine. The christian religion proposes no doctrines for our belief, but such, as are discovered by revelation, and most agreeable to a sound and unbiassed judgment. Notwithstanding the strictest scrutiny has been made, notwithstanding every particular passage has been sifted ; no one material flaw has been discovered, to endanger the fabric : Nay, those very things, which were thought insuperable objections against it, upon a closer examination, have been found illustrious confirmations of the truth of it. If all the load of objections and difficulties industriously raised, like so many weights tied about a body, cannot sink christianity ; it must be upheld and supported by that energy of truth, which is stronger than all things, and will prevail. Many are the devices of man's heart ; but the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever : many have been the devices of men's hearts and heads against christianity ; from its youth up have they fought against it : but it is the counsel of the Lord ; and therefore has hitherto stood, and will maintain its ground.

The doctrine of christianity cannot be amended.

All the doctrines of our Saviour have a natural tendency, and a direct and powerful influence, to reform men's lives and correct their manners. None of them were calculated, for the gratification of men's idle curiosities, or the busying or amusing them with airy and useless speculation ; much less were they intended, for an exercise of our credulity, or to try how far we could bring our reason to submit to our faith : but as, on the one hand, they were plain and simple, and such as, by their agreeableness to the rational faculties of mankind, did highly recommend themselves to our belief ; so, on the other hand, they had an immediate relation to practice, and were the proper ground and foundation, upon which all human and divine virtues were naturally to be built. The present wickedness of christians cannot be owing, to any defect in the doctrine of Christ ; nor be urged, as

Not affected by wicked lives.

a proof

a proof of the real inefficacy of it, towards rendering men holy : because there was a time, when it had all the success of this kind, which could be expected ; the time of its earliest appearance in the world, when the practice of the generality of christians was a just comment on the precepts of Christ : when they could appeal from their doctrines, to their lives ; and challenge their worst enemies, to shew any remarkable difference between them : when they were so far from injustice and wrong, and the several wicked arts of deceiving ; that, in the vast multitude of converts, no man said aught was his own ; but they had all things common ; and were, not only of one faith and worship, but of one heart and of one soul. If the efficacy and power of the christian doctrine must be tried by its fruits, the gospel is the same now as it was then ; equally the power of God unto salvation, equally mighty in pulling down of strong holds : that it doth not still produce the same effects, therefore, must be owing, not to any ineptitude or defect in the means, but to other causes and considerations. The gospel, though it be the great instrument of holiness, yet can make those alone holy, who consider and weigh it, and fasten its holy rules upon their hearts and consciences, by meditation and study. It is very hard therefore, to make our faith answerable for the ill manners of those, who do not in good earnest receive it ; but much harder still that those very men should press the objection most eagerly, without whose loose and immoral lives there would not be near so much ground and colour for it. Consequently religious opinions are to be examined, by scripture and reason, not by the lives and practice of those who espouse them.

Disputes (it is true) there will always be, about revelation ; as there have been, about every thing else. Is it any wonder, men should dispute about religion, which is almost the only thing, about which it is worth while to dispute at all ? If religion were set aside, would all disputes immediately cease ? No : there would be many more (which a serious sense of it upon our minds prevents) about things of less importance, about every thing, on which

Nor by religious disputes.

which men had misplaced their esteem. It is a mistake, to imagine, the obscurity of scripture has given birth to different opinions in material points: men's preconceived opinions have made them endeavour, to obscure and darken the scripture, though ever so plain: and, notwithstanding the many differences and disputes about particular doctrines among christians (excepting such, as have intolerably corrupted the very fundamental doctrines, and even the main design itself, of the whole christian dispensation) these disputes among christians have not been like those among the philosophers, concerning the whole scheme and system of things, but only concerning particular explications of particular doctrines; which kind of disputes do not at all affect the certainty of the whole religion itself, nor ought in reason to be any manner of hindrance to the effect, which the plain and weightier, and confessedly more important fundamental doctrines ought to have, upon the hearts and lives of those, who profess their belief in God, and acknowledge it their duty to obey his commands. The principles of christianity may be out of fashion: but, what they want in the fashion, they make up in weight, solidity, and intrinsic worth.

To those unhappy advocates of infidelity, who would gravely pretend to persuade the world, that Religion is only a state-engine or politic device, to keep the poor ignorant people in awe; and that it arose at first, from fear, education, and state policy: to these deluded men, I say, it may be sufficient to reply; that even their own objection admits, Religion conduces very much to the support of government and order in the world, and consequently is very beneficial to mankind in general; and so, to every man in particular, where its duties and obligations are duly observed, it gives such a peace and tranquillity of mind, and such a firmness and resolution of heart, as is utterly inconsistent with that groundless and unreasonable Fear, which is here supposed to be the parent of it. Education (we own) and the prevalence of custom are great: but then they must be such, as strike in

Objection.

Answer.

*Not from
fear nor
from custom.*

with

with our corrupt passions and affections ; not such, as endeavour to restrain and controul them. What goes against the grain, can never last long ; we may therefore reasonably suppose, that Religion, which gives such a check to our depraved appetites, had long since been exterminated the world ; had it not laid such fast hold upon our natures, that there is no shaking it off.

Every age is apt to condemn the wisdom of the preceding, whether we stand upon our forefathers shoulders, or no ; we certainly think we see farther. It is wonderful, therefore, that in so many ages as have passed, no persons have been able to make such a discovery of the artifice of religion, as to free mankind from its pretended slavery. It cannot be said, ‘ there were none to attempt it ;’ because efforts of this kind have been but too frequent, though always successful, and redounding to the greater confirmation of religion : it cannot be said, ‘ there were none ready to join in such a design ;’ for all bad men (whose number is not small) wish for no kind of religion at all ; and what they wish for, they are willing to effect, if they could. How comes it then, after all, that religion still prevailed, and the terrors of a Deity could not be shaken off ; no, not by the greatest politicians themselves, who thought they understood all the arts of government, as well as any who went before them ? If the principles of religion had been first

*Nor from
politicks.*

introduced merely by a state-policy, the politicians and governors of the world (we might think) would be likely to have known something of it ; at least, so much, as to be less subject to the anxieties of Conscience, which the despising of such principles, and living in opposition to them, generally creates : whereas we find, on the contrary, that, in all ages, the greatest men (who had nothing to fear from human power) have been as much affrighted by the secret terrors of religion, and have undergone as great agonies of mind, as the meanest mortals : And, as the

*From rea-
son.*

reason of the thing is sufficient to convince us, that religion at first was no state-juggle ; so, if we look into the records of antiquity, we shall easily perceive, that, the farther we go backwards,

wards, the stronger is our evidence against this suggestion.

The most ancient writings in the world, without all controversy, are those of the holy Scriptures; and among these, the book of *Job* is deservedly accounted one of the earliest: yet we may observe therein, not only the sense of the duties of religion, wherewith the people were possessed in those days; but even how customary it was, to appeal to the tradition of former times, concerning these matters. *Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age* (says one of *Job's* friends) *and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers; for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing.* But, why does he thus appeal, to the observation of former ages? Even to evince the bad condition of all, who are not sincere in their religion: for, *as the rush* (says he) *without mire, and the flag without water, wither before other herbs; so are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.* And anti-Whence it is apparent, that, in the earliest times we can read of, men had the same sense of religion, and the same notions of God's indignation against impiety, that we now have: considering therefore, that no time or place can be assigned, to give any reasonable ground for supposing, the first principles of religion were any human contrivance: we may, without farther arguments, conclude, they were from the beginning.

In fine, if religion had been a trick and contrivance of so long a date, as these deluded men would pretend; it must necessarily have been found out at one time or other; and, in consequence of that, must have been banished out of the world long before now; but (thanks be to God!) the credit of it is not yet extinct; which can be owing to nothing, but the invincible reasons, whereon it stands. In every age there has not been wanting the wit and malice of profane persons, to undermine and blow it up: but the foundations, whereon it is built, are so firm and stable, and have endured the violent shocks and secret attempts of so many ages; that as long as reason and good order prevail in the world, we have no occasion to fear, that religion will fail. Were religion and the being of a God, matters of mere speculation, indeed; these men

might trifle and sport with them, as long as they pleased: but, as they are made fundamental parts of every man's salvation; they seem to run too great a hazard, who (for the bare gratification of a foolish singularity) venture to deny them; for, as these men cannot phanſy things into being, ſo neither can they make them vaniſh into nothing, by the ſtubborn confidence of their own imagination. What is it then, (you will ſay) makes them thus fool-hardy, and tempts them to be thus deſperate? Why truly (if you will believe them) it is to ſet the world free, from the prejudices of vulgar errors, and the ſlavery of that bug-bear, Conſcience. Ah wretched freedom! which, to deliver us from one imaginary evil, brings upon us a thouſand real miſchiefs; which degrades the dignity of human nature, ſaps the foundation of all ſocieties, opens a ſluice to all kind of wickedneſs, and takes away from

*The com-
forts of
religion.*

man his only comfort in the time of diſtreſs: for, ſince man of himſelf is infinitely inſufficient, for his own happineſs; liable to many evils and miſeries, which he can neither prevent nor redreſs; full of wants, which he cannot ſupply; ſurrounded with infirmities, which he cannot remove; and obnoxious to dangers, which he can no way eſcape; where can he turn himſelf without a God, or where reſpoſe his anxious thoughts, but in his divine providence? In the day of adverſity eſpecially, when all other friends are apt to forſake him; how dark and gloomy muſt every thing about him look, without God! An unhappy mortal, deep ſunk in miſeries and miſfortunes; ſtruggling with innumerable hardſhips here upon earth, and at the ſame time deſtitute of a protector and patron in heaven; is in a condition, not to be imagined without horror and trembling amazement.

SUNDAY VI.

I. *Of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, why it was ordained; and* II. *Of the Preparation before receiving it, by Examination of conscience, Repentance, Faith, Obedience and making Satisfaction.* III. *Of those Duties, to be done at the time of receiving, and* IV. *After receiving; and the Benefit of frequent Communion.* V. *Of the Honour due to God's Name; and of the Sins against it, as Blasphemy, Swearing; including assertory, promissory, and unlawful Oaths.* VI. *Of perjury.* VII. *Of vain Oaths, or common swearing, Cursing; and the sin of them; and* VIII. *Of Vows.*

HAVING thus learned, and resolved to believe, ALL the ARTICLES of the *Christian Faith*; our next duty is, to partake of the LORD'S SUPPER; *Of the* which, as we are taught by the church, *Lord's sup-* is not only a sign of the love, that christi-
ans ought to have among themselves one *per.*
to another; but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch, that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread, which we break, is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner: and the mean, whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is Faith.* This is therefore justly reckoned one of the most important actions of our holy religion; whereby we repeat and renew the covenant, we made with God in our Baptism; distinguish ourselves, as the disciples of the blessed Jesus; and are admitted, to the highest act of communion with his sacred *Its benefits.* person: for therein our corrupt nature is purified, by applying the merits of Christ's blood; and our weakness is strengthened, by receiving the influence of his grace, which he has purchased for us by his death. But he, who lives in the habitual practice of any known sin, without repentance, must not approach to the holy table;

table; lest he be found, to mock God, and contemn^r his authority. Nevertheless it may not be inferred, that the danger of unworthy receiving makes it safest to abstain from receiving at all, or at least to receive but seldom; because the danger of neglecting and contemning a plain command of our Saviour is more hazardous to our salvation, than performing it without some due qualification to make it worthy.

For the clearer understanding of this matter, it may be necessary to take notice; that, since it is allowed on all hands, that there can be no just bar to frequency of communion, but the want of preparation; which is only such a bar, as men may themselves remove, if they please: it concerns them highly, to take off the impediment as soon as possible, and not to trust to vain hopes of alleviating one fault by committing another. The danger, of misperforming any religious duty, is a cause of fear and caution, but no excuse for neglect: God insists upon the doing it, and the doing it well also. It was no sufficient plea, for the slothful servant under the gospel, that he thought his master hard to be pleased, and thereupon neglected his bounden duty: but, on the contrary, the use he ought to have made of that consideration was, to have been so much the more wakeful and diligent in his master's service: in the case of the Holy Communion therefore, it is to very little purpose, to plead the strictness of self-examination or preparation, by way of excuse, either for a total, or a frequent, or a long neglect of it. A man may say, 'he comes not to the Lord's table, because he is not prepared;' and so far he assigns a good reason: but, if he should be farther asked, 'why he is not prepared, when he may;' then he can only make some trifling insufficient excuse, or remain speechless. The duty therefore being necessary, the true consequence we should draw from the danger of performing it unworthily, should be to excite ourselves to care and diligence in preparing ourselves for the due discharge of it; but never to delude ourselves, by false reasons, to such a neglect, as will certainly increase our guilt.

There lies an obligation upon all Christians, to receive the

the holy communion; from the plain and positive command of our blessed Saviour, to do this in remembrance of him. This makes it a necessary and perpetual duty incumbent upon all christians; and, to live in the neglect of a plain law by

A perpetual duty.

the author of our religion, is no way consistent with the character we profess, of being the disciples of Christ. This worship is peculiar to the Christian religion; as we thereby, in a particular manner, proclaim ourselves followers of the blessed Jesus; upon which account the primitive christians (at least in some places) never held their public assemblies without it; and the faithful, who joined in all the other parts of public worship, never failed to partake of the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Yet the Church declares, 'that the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing.' †

Before we can be qualified to participate of this holy sacrament, we must understand the nature and end of its institution, or we cannot offer an acceptable service to God. Remember therefore, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper *was ordained, for a continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.* As the Son of God, by suffering

Why ordained by Christ.

death upon the cross, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and, by virtue of this sacrifice, intercedes for us in heaven: so we on earth should commemorate this his sacrifice on the cross, by offering bread and wine; which, after consecration, become the representatives of his body and blood, offered to God the Father in this sacrament; that he may be favourable to

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* *And the Laws of England have enjoined, That every Parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the Year; of which Easter to be one. See the Rubrick, at the end of the Communion-Service. † See the 29th Article of Religion.*

us, and give us his grace, through the merits of the death of Christ.

II. As we ought not, and must not neglect coming to this holy sacrament ; so no body must dare to approach that holy table, without a due preparation ; carefully weighing, what is necessary to be done, *before*, and *at*, and *after* receiving the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.

Before receiving, let a man examine his life and conversation, by the rule of God's word. A *Things to be* life, governed by the precepts of the gospel, *done before* is the best preparation for this sacrament : *receiving.* because he, who believes the christian religion, and makes it his constant business to perform what our Saviour hath enjoined ; has all that substantial preparation, which qualifies christians to partake of this ordinance. This *Examina-* holy sacrament we ought therefore to receive, when any *sion.* opportunities present ; for it does not so much oblige us to new duties, as it enables us to make good those obligations, which we in our baptism have promised and vowed to perform. Let a man therefore examine himself never so much, fast never so strictly, and pray never so fervently ; if his life have not been pious towards God, just towards his neighbour, and sober in reference to himself ; without effectual resolutions, all those duties, in which he employs himself before he receives, will never be able to make him a fit guest at God's table : they are indeed good preparative helps, when they repair those breaches sin has made in our souls ; but, without steady purposes of amendment, they are of no value in the sight of God, and will not be able to qualify us for a worthy participation of the body and blood of Christ : if our lives prepare not the way for our offerings, we approach the holy altar in vain. We should hereby be deterred from receiving only out of custom, or in order to qualify ourselves for some temporal or worldly employment : but pious christians, who are sincerely wearied and grieved with the burthen of their sins, ought not to be discouraged in their duty ; because here they will find their proper remedy ; here they will meet with that strength and assistance, which is so necessary to enable them to lead that holy

Sund. 6.] *Preparation for the Lord's Supper.* 151

holy life, which they purpose for the time to come ; beginning it, with a strict examination of the state of their own souls : concerning which, take these directions.

First, Recollect your baptismal vow ; * and endeavour to rivet in your soul a just sense, of the mercies promised on God's part, and of the particular duties to which, you (in common with all christians) are obliged thereby for our chief business at the Lord's table is, to renew our baptismal covenant with God.

Secondly, Enquire of thy conscience (the candle of the Lord) how thou hast broken that covenant made in thy baptism, either by thought, word, or deed. We transgress by our thoughts, when we are contriving and compassing any forbidden thing : but irregular thoughts, † which spring up in our minds, and are but little in our power ; are neither sins nor matter of punishment, any farther than they are causes and principles of a sinful choice and resolution ; because, as we assent to, or dissent from those motions, which are in our minds, so will our thoughts be virtuous or sinful. It is not enough, to know, what is sin : we must also understand the true state and condition of our souls. Without self reflection, a man may have every vice under the sun, and not know he has any ; provided he have it not in a high degree. For one, who perishes for want of knowing his duty, there are numbers, who are lost for ever, for want of seriously considering it, and laying it to heart. Our repentance must be full and complete, and extend to all those particulars, wherein we have transgressed the laws of God ; and until we discover all our follies and infirmities, we cannot amend, or so much as watch against them §.

Our repentance by this means may in some measure keep pace, with our errors and failings ; when this examination is frequently repeated before the Lord's supper : and thus we may prevent the insupportable weight of the sins

*The use of
self-examination.*

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of

* See the baptismal vow, Sunday 2. Sect. vii.

† See Sunday 13. Sect. 1. concerning the Government of our Thoughts.

§ For which purpose you will be greatly assisted, by the Heads of Self-examination, in the devotions at the end of this book.

of a whole life, falling upon us all at once ; when we may neither have understanding, nor leisure, to recollect ourselves ; much less, to exercise any fit and proper acts of repentance towards God or man. In this examination, let us consider the sins, which most easily beset our weakest part, by nature or custom least defensible : for the devil, like a skilful general, will attack us, where we lie most exposed ; hoping, by gaining that post, to make the town quickly surrender at his discretion. For which reason, in surveying the state of our minds, we should have an eye to those places, which will least bear an assault ; those appetites or passions, which most frequently occasion our fall from God's grace. Again, we should consider the several aggravations of our follies : whether committed, against the light of our minds ; with the free consent of our wills ; and in despite of the checks of our own consciences : whether they have been often repeated ; and whether they be transient acts, or habitual disorders. We ought to observe all those previous steps, which have made us transgress, which have been fatal to the corrupting of our innocence, and the occasions of betraying our virtue. This make us thoroughly acquainted, with ourselves and our own cor-

*Humilia-
tion.*

ruption ; a knowledge, which is of the greatest consequence : by this we are driven to repentance, as the only cure for that guilt, which oppresses our souls, and for which we lie at the mercy of God's vengeance ; we are disposed to humility ; and gain a lively sense of God's power, and of our own frequent errors and miscarriages : we keep our accounts clear and even ; and advance towards christian perfection : this making us careful for the future, to avoid those faults, which we have discovered in our former lives and conversations ; not only through fear of punishment, but because we have offended so good and gracious a God. This duty should be accompanied with

*The several
parts of
Confession.*

Confession of sins to God ; the judgment a man passes upon himself, either of approbation or of condemnation, when he has deliberately weighed his own actions ; the sentence which his reason suggests, that God (the judge of all the earth) will pass upon him. It is not barely a re-
petition

Sund. 6.] *Preparation for the Lord's Supper.* 153

petition of the faults, we are guilty of, to God Almighty ; but such an acknowledgment of our faults, as is accompanied with shame for them, with hatred of them, and with resolutions to amend them.

Repentance, therefore, doth plainly include four things. *First*, Contrition ; which *Contrition.* is an holy grief, excited by a lively sense, not only of the punishment due to guilt, but likewise of the infinite goodness of God, against which we have offended ; accompanied, with a detestation of our sin, and of ourselves for it. *Secondly*, it is requisite, that this sense, and this sorrow, and this indignation, put us upon applying ourselves to God ; with shame and confusion laying open our miserable condition before him, and humbly and heartily begging his mercy and favour, through the merits and intercession of our Lord Jesus : this is Confession in the precise strict sense of the word. *Thirdly*, it is necessary, that we enter at the same time into a stedfast and *Confession.* serious purpose, of amending what hath been *Purpose of amendment.* amiss in us ; and of living more carefully, and more obediently to the laws of God, for the future. In such cases, where we have been preserved from guilt ; we must give glory to God, and thankfully acknowledge that grace, which hath restrained us from sin : for, as no man is qualified for the mercy of God, who doth not devoutly confess his sins ; so, if we consider what is imported in confession, we shall be convinced, that it is a thing, which in the very nature of it must needs (above all other things we can do) recommend us to God ; by approaching to God with an hearty sense of our sins, and confessing them before him with truly contrite and penitent hearts, we make the best reparation we are capable of, for the affronts and injuries, which by our sins we have committed against his divine majesty : and, the more particular our confession is, the better it is, and the more acceptable it will be ; because this particular confession is an argument and an expression of the sincerity of our repentance, and shews, that we have searched and examined our hearts to the bottom, and that we harbour no concealed affection to any particular sin whatsoever ; but, that we are willing, to bring out every enemy that speaks

opposition to God and his laws, to be slain before him. *Fourthly* ; when our sins have been not only against God,

Satisfaction. but against our neighbour, we must make him Satisfaction : * we must restore, whatever we have unjustly taken from him by fraud

or force ; we must vindicate his reputation if we have blemished it by calumny and evil speaking : we must endeavour his recovery, by making him sensible of such sins and dangerous errors, as we have drawn him into ; that he may be put in a way of pardon, before the throne of divine justice : and we must from our hearts forgive those, who have injured us ; if we expect, that God should forgive us our faults ; resting in a sure confidence,

Faith. that God's grace will be so effectually conveyed to our souls by this sacrament, as to seal God's pardon of all our sins for Christ's sake, provided we perform our part, in forsaking them, and obeying his commandments for the future.

If we do not strive after this temper of mind, it is impossible we should be fit guests at the Lord's *Resolutions of obedience.* table : for, this was the end of his death ; which will deliver none from the punishment due to sin, who do not make use of that grace he has purchased, to overcome the power and dominion thereof. How dare we pretend, to commemorate our Saviour's sufferings ; if we do not renounce and detest, what was the cause thereof ? How can we expect to be received by our Lord ; if we do not declare war against his enemies, and not in the least prosecute those sinful lusts and affections, which tormented and nailed him to the cross ?

Of the means. It becomes us, to lay aside all resentment against those, who have injured us ; when we go to commemorate that infinite love, which took pity of us, when we were enemies to him. Such love should work into us a conformity, and make us desirous of being reconciled to those who have offended us ; to be at peace with all the world, as we desire to be loved and forgiven, and to be at peace with our Redeemer. Can we scruple to forgive others, who are undone ourselves, unless we be forgiven ? Is it not in vain, to ask pardon ; when we find no inclination in our hearts, to grant it to

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* See Sunday 11. S. A. iii.

our neighbours? Or, can we forbear giving, what we are able, to the poor; when we go to communicate so much bounty and liberality, exercised towards us? It is our duty, to do good to all men, because they are God's creatures; but necessitous christians must partake of our beneficence, because they are members of the same body, and are particular objects of the mercy and tenderness of our blessed Redeemer, who has made it one of the marks of the sincerity of our love to God: for, whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels from him; How dwelleth the love of God in him? Which sincerity of our love to God can never be so well attested, as when we are calling to mind the divine love, displaying itself to us in the bleeding wounds of our Saviour Christ.

Charity.

Prayer ought to have its due proportion, in our preparatory exercises for this holy sacrament; because it helps us to that temper of mind, which makes us welcome guests at God's table; and fills our thoughts with such spiritual objects as are proper to entertain them at such opportunities. Our thoughts of business and affairs must be (as much as possible) laid aside, when we solemnly approach God's presence: and our thoughts should be applied entirely to such spiritual subjects, as the christian sacrifice naturally brings into our minds. Prayer in its own nature takes off our thoughts, from the things

*Quickening
of graces.*

Devotion.

of the world, and all sensible entertainments; and raises them to God, and those things which concern our eternal life: Prayer masters our evil habits, by a lively sense of our duty; and fortifies us against temptation, by the strength it communicates to our souls. Wherefore, when we design to approach the holy table, we should prepare the way by devotions, and by attending the prayers of the church in publick. Whoever presumes, to come to the holy table of the Lord, without this wedding garment; must expect, to be cast out into outward darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth; for though God bear with such a sinner for a while, his damnation is sure, if not prevented by a timely repentance: if he

*The necessity of these
graces.*

will

will continue, either wilfully to neglect this his bounden duty, or the means of receiving it worthily ; his punishment will be intolerable : for, who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings ? ‘ Therefore the church ex-
 ‘ horts us, to repent of our sins, or else not to come to
 ‘ that holy table : lest, after the taking of that holy sa-
 ‘ crament, the devil enter into us, as he entered into
 ‘ Judas ; and fill us full of all iniquities, and bring us
 ‘ to destruction both of body and soul. And, because it
 ‘ is requisite, that no man shall come to the holy com-
 ‘ munion, but with a full trust in God’s mercy, and with
 ‘ a quiet conscience : therefore, if there be any person,
 ‘ who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience
 ‘ herein, but requireth farther comfort or counsel ; then
*The useful-
 ness of a
 spiritual
 guide.* ‘ let him go, to some discreet and learned
 ‘ minister of God’s word, and open his
 ‘ grief ; that, by the ministry of God’s holy
 ‘ word, he may receive the benefit of abso-
 ‘ lution, together with ghostly counsel and
 ‘ advice, to the quieting his conscience, and avoiding of
 ‘ all scruple and doubtfulness*.

Thus, having laid down what is necessary, to qualify a christian for receiving the Lord’s Supper ; I cannot better sum up our duty in these particulars, than in that short exhortation of the Church : ‘ Ye, that do truly and ear-
 ‘ nestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and cha-
 ‘ rity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new
 ‘ life, following the commandments of God, and walking
 ‘ from henceforth in his holy ways ; draw near with faith,
 ‘ and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort, and
 ‘ make your humble confession to almighty God†.’

III. Having duly reflected on our own unworthiness,
*At receiv-
 ing, medi-
 tate on thy
 unworthi-
 ness.* and meditated upon the sufferings of Christ,
 his infinite love to mankind therein, his pro-
 pitiation for sins, and our obligation to
 thankfulness arising from thence ; we should
 receive the holy sacrament, with great reve-
 rence and devotion ; with particular attention
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* See the first Exhortation in the Communion Service.

† See the Communion Service immediately before the Confession.

of mind, accompanying him that administers, throughout the whole office: which is admirably framed and composed, to express all those pious dispositions and devout affections, which well-prepared minds ought to exercise upon such occasions; as our repentance, in the confession and absolution; our charity in relieving our poor brethren, in praying for all conditions of men, and in forgiving those who have offended us; our humility, in acknowledging our unworthiness; our resolutions of better obedience, in presenting ourselves a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto God. At the time of consecration, when thou seest the bread broken, and the wine poured out; remember, how Christ suffered for us; how his head was crowned with thorns, his back was scourged at a pillar, his hands nailed to the cross, and the last drop of his blood spilt with a spear, for our sins: look with an eye of faith on him, who is the sacrifice once offered for the sins of the whole world; beg of God the Father, that he would accept the satisfaction, and pardon all your sins, and be reconciled to thee, for the merits of his beloved Son, who died for us. Consider, what inexpressible thanks are due from us, for all that he has done to reconcile us to God; and think on those great agonies of soul, which drew from him that most disconsolate exclamation; 'My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' This will produce in thy soul a most hearty and sincere thanksgiving, and teach thee to admire the love of our Maker, who gave his only-begotten Son to redeem mankind. Should not such love as this deter thee, from sinning any more?

When you are about to receive, remember, this sacrament is God's seal to the New Covenant; in which we receive pardon of sins, grace to resist temptations, and a title to the inheritance of eternal bliss; yet upon no other condition, than that we do also resolve to perform our part of the christian covenant promised in baptism; which resolution cannot

Of the sufferings of Christ.

The atonement wrought by them.

Thankfulness due to him for them.

The benefits of the new covenant sealed in this sacrament.

be better expressed, than by an hearty *Amen* to that excellent form, when the minister gives thee the bread and wine, saying, *The body of our Lord, &c.* and so conclude with praises and thanksgivings in the hymns and devotions after the sacrament is received. While others are communicating, you may enlarge yourselves upon these subjects; always taking care, that your private devotions give place to the public; and that you lay aside your own prayers, when the minister calls on you, to join with him in the public form of prayer: all which are particularly described in that devout treatise, called, the *New Week's Preparation*; wherein the young communicant is furnished with such directions, for his devout behaviour, and beneficial joining with the minister, during the office of administration, as (I apprehend) are not to be met with elsewhere.

IV. But, lest we relapse into sin by surprize, through our infirmities or from more provoking facts; it concerns us to look about, and revolve in our minds, how our conduct should be stated, and our life steered, *after* a worthy receiving of the holy sacrament. Therefore, on our first retreat from this heavenly banquet, we should in our closets pay God the tribute of fervent prayer and praise, that we may walk in the same course all the days of our life. 'This will be some guard and security to us, that we do not over hastily drench and mire ourselves in worldly affairs.

We ought to watch over our own hearts, with great application and some anxiety, lest we depart from our well grounded resolutions and deliberate vows; because this would render our last state worse than the first: if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth a certain looking for of vengeance and fiery indignation; God being exasperated, our consciences raging or being laid waste: and those pardons and graces, which have been vouchsafed to us, rising up in judgment against us, if we warp from our duty. No lawful

*Remember
good resolutions.*

vow

vow can ever be dispensed with, because God is a party ; * and nothing, short of a divine revelation, can be sufficient evidence, that God will discharge any man from such a vow.

The danger of sinning.

Thus the frequent use of the holy sacrament is the likeliest means, of increasing our veneration and respect thereto. Familiarity with the best of men may be apt, to diminish that respect, which was paid to them ; by reason of those frailties and imperfections, which are sometimes mixt with very great virtues, and which are only discovered by a great intimacy with them : but the oftner we converse with God, in his holy ordinances ; the more we shall admire his divine perfections, and be disposed the more, to conform ourselves to his will and example : an object of infinite perfection in itself, and of infinite goodness to us, will always raise our admiration, and heighten our esteem and respect, the more we contemplate it ; it being the discovery of some imperfection, where we thought there was none, which abates the value and reverence we had for any thing or person.

Means for increasing our regard to this sacrament.

Besides, frequent communion preserves a lively sense of religion upon our minds, and invigorates our souls with fresh strength and power to perform our obligations. This strengthens that intimate union, which ought to be inviolable, between Jesus and the members of the mystical body of Christ : it is the proper nourishment of our souls : without which we can no more maintain our spiritual life, than we can our temporal without meat and drink : it raises in us strong ardours of love and consolation ; so that it becomes the greatest torment we can endure to offend God, and our greatest delight to do his pleasure : it is the sovereign remedy against all temptations, by mortifying our passions, and spiritualizing our affections ; for how can we love any sinful satisfaction, which crucified the Lord of glory ; and fix our hearts upon perishing objects, when he only deserves the whole man, as he requires ? Frequent communion ratifies and

The benefits of frequent communion.

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* See vows, in Sunday 6. Sect. viii.

confirms to us the pardon of our sins, and repairs those breaches, which our follies have made within us: it fortifies our minds, against all those afflictions and calamities, which are often the lot of the righteous in this miserable world; and administers to us such comfort and peace of conscience, as surpasses all understanding.

SUNDAY VI. PART II.

V. We now proceed to the *third* Commandment, or the

giving God the *Honour due unto his NAME.*
Of the ho- The highest reverence is due to the name of
nour due to God, in our thoughts, in our words, and in
G d's name. our actions: therefore, when we mention

the word of God, or any persons or things which have a relation to his worship or glory, with irreverence; it is, by just interpretation, denying to honour God in his name. What the honouring of his name is (I apprehend)

Sins against will best be understood, from a due consideration of those particulars, whereby it is
it. dishonoured; to avoid these things, being the best way of honouring *his holy Name.*

The *first* is BLASPHEMY, or speaking any evil thing of God. The highest degree of Blasphemy, *Blasphemy.* is *curfing* God, or those persons or things, which have a peculiar relation to him; or indeed, cursing any of God's creatures, which are all the works of his hands: which sin may not be committed, in thought, word, or deed, without the utmost outrage and profanation. This kind of impiety the Psalmist reckons, in the highest degree of sin; where he distinguishes offenders, into three several ranks, Ps. i. 1. 'The man, that walketh in the counsel of the ungodly; the man, that standeth in the way of sinners; and the man, that sitteth in the seat of the scornful:' meaning those, who not only neglect, but also *scuff* at religion, and make a *mock* at that, which of all things in the world is of the greatest importance. David, speaking of God's enemies, brands them, with cursing God inwardly: and, cursing him openly or to the face, is the devil's suggestion against Job. St. Paul says, God's name may be blasphemed by our wicked actions: 'By breaking the law dishonourest thou God? for the name of God is blasphemed

‘phemed among the Gentiles, through you.’ ‘Your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me; saith the prophet Ezekiel.’

Secondly, we dishonour God’s name, by *swearing falsely* or *rashly*. An oath is an invocation of God; an appeal to him, to attest what we say to be true, whether the name of God be or be not expressly mentioned: for, in all these cases, a man does virtually call God to witness; and, in so doing, he does by consequence invoke him, as a judge and an avenger, if what he swears be not true. There is indeed a great use and even necessity of oaths, in many cases; *When law-* which is so great, that human society can *ful.* very hardly (if at all) subsist long without

them. Government would many times be very insecure; and, for the faithful discharge of offices of great trust, in which the welfare of the publick is nearly concerned, it is not possible to find any security, equal to that of an oath: because the obligation of that reaches, to the most secret and hidden practices of men; and takes hold of them, in many cases, where the penalty of no human law can have any awe or force upon them. An oath is also the best means, of ending matters in debate: for mankind can never be fully satisfied, where their estates or lives are concerned, unless the evidence be assured by an oath.

God himself requires in a lawful oath these three conditions, truth, judgment, and righteousness. Hence the church declares, That ‘as we confess, that vain and rash swearing is *The conditions of a lawful oath.* forbidden Christian men by our Lord

‘Jesus Christ and James his apostle: so we judge, that Christian religion doth not prohibit; but that a man may swear, when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity; so it be done according to the prophet’s teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.’* In which sense oaths are generally divided into assertory and promissory oaths. That is called an assertory oath, when a man affirms or denies upon oath a matter of fact, past or present; *Assertory oaths.*

when

* See the 39th Article of Religion.

when he swears, that a thing was or is, so or not so: and
Promissory a promissory oath is a promise, confirmed by
Oaths. an oath, which always respects something future; which promise is called a vow, if it be made directly and immediately to God; but an oath only, when made to man.

In every lawful oath there must be truth: we must
Truth. take great care, when we are upon our oaths; that we say nothing, but what we know or believe to be true; for there cannot be a greater provocation offered to almighty God, who is the God of truth, than to bring him in for witness and voucher to a falsehood: besides to do this, destroys the very end of taking oaths; which is, to bring truth to light. Again, in every lawful oath, there must be judgment; we must not swear rashly and unadvisedly, but in cool and sober thoughts; having duly considered, how sacred a thing an oath is: moreover, we must be fully satisfied, that the occasion is every way fit and deserving of so sacred a seal. And finally, we must swear in righteousness: we must set aside all respects of relation or friendship, and all other grounds whatsoever of favour and affection, to any party concerned; as also the considerations of interest or disadvantage, which may happen to ourselves; regarding only the justice of the cause, whether we give our oaths for the defence of the innocent, or the punishment of the guilty: and we must take care, that we swear not in a wrong case; though it were our own, and though we should reap ever so great a benefit in carrying our point.

From these three necessary conditions of swearing,
The obligation of an oath. in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, we may observe; that an oath is an act of religious worship, a part of that glory we are to give to God; being an open acknowledgment of his justice and truth; and that he is every where present, and knows and sees all things, and will avenge himself upon the ungodly; particularly upon those, who break this precept of his law. Wherefore it is not possible for men, to lay a more sacred and solemn obligation upon their consciences, than the religion of an oath,

oath, which binds our souls : because he, that swear-eth, lays the strongest obligations upon himself ; and puts his soul in pawn, for the truth of what he swears to : so that this obligation of an oath can never be violated, but at the utmost peril of God's judgment and vengeance.

VI. This will lead us to a true sense, of the dishonour done to God by the sin of PERJURY. Perjury is a solemn calling of God, to witness the truth of that, which we either know to be false, or do not know to be true. Such an oath implies a curse upon ourselves ; and is a crime of so high a nature, that no man can possibly be guilty of it, who has any sense at all of religion remaining upon his mind : for he, who knowingly and deliberately calls God to witness a falshood, to deceive or wrong his neighbour ; openly disclaims the mercies of God, and challenges the Almighty to shew him no favour.

Therefore, when a man asserts upon oath, what he knows to be otherwise ; or promises, what he does not intend to perform ; his oath becomes perjury : in like manner, when a man promisseth upon oath, to do that, which it is unlawful for him to do ; because this oath is contrary to a former obligation, it is perjury. Again, when a man is uncertain, whether what he swears to, be true ; his oath is perjury, in the act ; tho' not of the same degree of guilt, with the former : because it is not so fully and directly, against his conscience and knowledge. Men ought not to swear at a venture ; but to be certain of the truth, of what they assert upon oath : consequently, no man ought to swear positively to the truth of any thing, but what he himself hath learned, or seen, or heard ; which is the highest assurance, men are capable of, in this life. He also is guilty of perjury in the same degree, who promisseth upon oath, what he is not morally and reasonably certain he shall be able to do. Men are likewise guilty of perjury, who answer equivocally and doubtfully, or with reservation of something in their minds ; thinking thereby to salve the truth, of what they say. Oaths should therefore be attended, with calmness and simplicity : and, the use of oaths being, to assure the

*God greatly
dishonour'd
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the persons to whom they are made; they must be taken in the sense of those, who impose them: for there can be no greater affront to God, than to use his name to deceive our neighbour; nor can any thing more directly overthrow the great end and use of oaths, which are for confirmation, and to put an end to strife amongst men: because equivocation and reservation leave the matter, in the same uncertainty, as it was in before. Let not men think therefore, by this device to save themselves harmless from the guilt of so great a sin; for they do really encrease it, by adding to their iniquity the impudent folly, of mocking God and deceiving their own souls. Men are also guilty of perjury, after the act; who, having a real intention (when they swear) to perform what they promised, yet afterwards neglect to perform their oath; not for want of power (for, so long, as that continues, the obligation ceaseth) but for want of will, and a due regard to the oath they have sworn.

Seeing therefore, deliberate perjury is acting directly
The guilt against a man's knowledge, which is one of
and danger the greatest aggravations of any crime; I
of it. must add, that it is equally a sin against both
 tables, the highest affront to God, and of
 the most injurious consequence to our neighbour: by it
 the name of God is horribly abused, his judgment con-
 demned, and his vengeance insolently held at defiance;
 by it also, not only particular persons suffer wrong, but
 human society is injured; the foundations of public
 peace and justice, and the private security of every
 man's life and fortune, are at once overthrown; and the
 best and last way, the wisdom of men could devise for
 the decision of doubtful matters, is hereby defeated.
 Here it should be observed; that, as there is no threat-
 ening added to any other commandment, but to this and
 the second; it intimates to us, that (next to idolatry
 and the worship of a false God) Perjury is one of the
 greatest affronts, which can be offered to our Creator;
 and may, without aggravation, be accounted one of
The punish- those sins, which cry so loud to heaven, and
ment of it. quicken the pace of God's judgment upon
 the obstinate sinner: 'for the Lord will not
 ' hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.'

VII. Hence

VII. Hence we learn also the great sin, of that indecent wicked custom, rash SWEARING in common conversation. Of this sin, the first *Of common swearing, or vain oaths.* aggravation is; that they, who are guilty of it, are in perpetual danger of the crime of perjury: for he, who uses himself to swear frequently and habitually, will never attend carefully, that, what he swears, be true. Nay, it is too just an observation, that they, who *Leads to Perjury.* are at all accustomed to this vice, are then most apt to be guilty of it, when they are most provoked, and most suspicious that what they affirm is not credible. To call upon God perpetually, as witness to mean and trivial matters, is a manifest want of reverence, and of a just sense of God and religion.

CURSING also is another part of the profanation of the name of God. When men, in common *Of cursing* conversation, use curses and imprecations against their brethren or themselves; as the Jews did, when they answered Pilate, and said; ‘His blood be ‘on us and on our children!’ it is either with an intent and desire, that mischief may befall them; which is both malicious towards men, and also irreligiously thinking light of the curse of God: or else it is, without any such desire or intention; and then it is profanely supposing God, to have no regard to their behaviour. These men should recollect, that the vengeance of God will find them out; not only, for the evil deeds they commit; but for the profane folly (so frequent among us) of wishing that damnation to themselves, which they otherwise but too well deserve. They, who add to the guilt of their sins the binding power of a curse, are doubly unpardonable: they consent to their punishment, as they before consented to their crime; and their damnation therefore is every way just. These faults are the more inexcusable, because there cannot here be pretended, as in most other vices, any natural *No temptation to them.* temptation: there is no sensual pleasure in them, because they are not founded in the temper of the body: no man (I think) is born, with a swearing or cursing constitution; though a man may be naturally prone to anger or lust. Besides, there

there is as little profit, as pleasure in them; for, the common and trivial use of oaths and curses makes them perfectly insignificant to their end, and is so far from giving credit to a man's word, that it rather weakens its credit: for common swearing and cursing always argue a perpetual distrust of a man's own reputation; and is an acknowledgment, that he thinks his bare word not worthy to be taken. Neither can they be said, to adorn and fill a man's discourse; for it highly offends and grates upon all sober and considerate persons, who cannot be presumed, with any manner of ease and patience to hear God so affronted upon every slight account.

Common swearing is a crime, for which men can plead no excuse. They who pretend to do it ignorantly, and not observing and knowing what they do, are inexcusable. It is, certainly, no extenuation of a fault, that a man hath gotten the habit of it so perfect, that he commits it, when he does not think thereof: neither is that any just excuse, wherewith many deceive themselves, when they swear by any other thing, and not by their Maker; for this very precaution shews, that (if they were careful) they could as easily avoid the sin wholly, as attend to a particular circumstance in the manner of committing it; which circumstance (nevertheless) does not at all hinder it, from amounting in reality to the very same thing. As, in common speech, that usual prayer, 'Heaven bless or reward a man,' is evidently of the very same import; as if therein had been more expressly mentioned God, who dwelleth in heaven: so, swearing by any creature does in truth amount to the same thing, as swearing by the name of God, whose creature it is; and who alone indeed can finally be supposed to be appealed to, for the truth of the thing affirmed, and for the sincerity of the intention. This consideration should make men oppose the beginning of this vice, lest it grow into a habit very hard to be overcome. It must be a great charity, which can find out a way to reconcile a common custom of swearing, with a serious belief of the christian religion.

VIII. The name of God is also profaned by carelets and inconsiderate Vows: When the matter *Of vows.* of them is either unjust, impossible, or unreasonable; or the thing vowed, unprofitable, and of no tendency to promote true religion; or the manner of making the vow, rash and irreligious. Therefore the best and only good rule in this matter is, that among christians there is no use, no benefit, no encouragement given to any such thing, as making any vows at all: for, why should men needlessly bring snares upon their own souls, or entangle themselves in difficulties, where there is no command? The vows mentioned in the old Testament, are all, either parts of the Jewish ceremonial law, which is now wholly abolished; or else they signify only general resolutions of serving and obeying God, which can never too often or too seriously be renewed: as, when Jacob vowed, that the Lord should be his God; that is, that he would always continue steadfast in the true religion. In the New Testament there is (I think) not one instance, of any vow made by a Christian: the vow of Aquila, and that of the four persons with whom St. Paul purified himself, being both of them vows, which had been made before their conversion to christianity. Baptism indeed and the Lord's Supper are solemn vows of obedience towards God; but the matter of them is such, as was our indispensable duty before: and such a solemn renewing our holy resolutions of doing, what is of absolute necessity to be done, is undoubtedly of great and perpetual use. But, in other cases, vows are at best nothing, but needlessly snares upon men; and are generally of superstitious and unwarrantable practice: for, what is fit to be done, may be done, without laying upon ourselves unnecessary obligations; and such obligations can be of no benefit, but needlessly involve men in snares and scruples: so that the best direction, to be given to christians concerning this matter, is never to entangle themselves in any other obligations at all; but only take care, to keep those sacred vows and resolutions, which they solemnly enter into at baptism and the supper of the Lord.

SUNDAY VII.

I. *Of the WORSHIP due to God's Name ; setting forth the several parts of PRAYER.* II. *Of publick prayer, in the church, in the family ; and of our behaviour after public prayer.* III. *Of private prayer.* IV. *Of the necessary Condition of prayer.* V. *Of its only Object ; as also of its Power and Efficacy ; with answers to objections against this duty.* VI. *Of Repentance, and danger of delaying it ; and VII. Of Fasting, as a part of Repentance.*

Of the worship due to God. I. **T**HE next duty we owe to God, is **WORSHIP** : a duty peculiar to God alone ; and to be performed both by our souls and bodies. **PRAYER** is that part of the worship of God, which is performed by the soul : by it the soul addresses itself to God, and the mind raises itself towards heaven. Prayer receives different names, according to those various subjects the mind is employed about in such addresses : it is called *Confession*, when we bewail our particular sins with sorrow, and full purposes of amendment ; *petition*, when we implore God's mercy, and desire any favour from him ; *deprecation* or *supplication*, when we pray for the averting any evil ; *thanksgiving*, when we express a grateful sense of benefits received : it is styled *intercession*, when we beg any thing for others ; and *praise*, when we acknowledge and adore the divine perfections. In all these acts we have the great honour, of being admitted into God's presence, and of treating with him about those things, which chiefly concern our own happiness, or that of our neighbour.

In the *first* place, let us compose our spirits, and gather in our thoughts, from the mazes of the *Adoration.* world ; and then begin our prayers, with solemnly addressing ourselves to that Lord God almighty, with whom we have to do ; both by our inward composure and outward behaviour, declaring our full belief of his presence, and an holy awe and reverence of his majesty, and an entire reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ alone,

alone, for acceptance of our imperfect prayers before God the Father. Having thus given glory to God, we must humbly confess the sins we have committed in thought, word, or deed; and *Confession.* earnestly request pardon, for all our sins of omission and ignorance. Confession (then) is either a general, or a more particular, acknowledgment of our sins before God: the former, a necessary part of all our public prayers; the latter, most proper in our private prayers only: not, that we can thereby inform God, of what he does not know; but, in a true sense of our own simplicity, corruption, and wretchedness, to humble ourselves before the throne of his grace, and own ourselves liable to what punishment his justice shall condemn us to. But, above all, we must be most heartily thankful to God the Father, for his patience and long-suffering towards us, and for his readiness to be reconciled to us through Jesus Christ his only Son; concluding always, with humble professions of sorrow and shame for sin, and with firm resolutions of amendment; resolving through the assistance of divine grace, that we will be better and do better, for the time to come.

The next part of Prayer is that, commonly called Petition: it is the entreating of God to grant *Petition.* us all those things, which are needful both for our souls and bodies. For our souls (as our sins are, what we ought to be most afraid of) let *For our souls.* our confessions be always attended, with petitions for pardon and forgiveness, through the merits of Christ Jesus; that he may grant us his favour, blessing, and gracious repentance; *For pardon of our sins.* that it may please him, to grant us a comfortable sense of his pardon to us; that we may abound in righteousness, hope, quietness, and assistance, for ever, through the power of the Holy Ghost; that it may please God, to strengthen us with his grace against every evil thought, word, and deed, and all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; to direct our consciences, shew us the way of our duty, and make us wise and humble Christians: and that he may plant in us all holy principles and dispositions, and encrease every grace in our hearts; as faith, fear, love,

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charity,

charity, self-denial, humility, meekness, patience, contentment, and hope in God and Christ; but especially those graces, which we are most in want of; and a hope of eternal life, prepared for such as love God and keep his commandments: that he may make us prudent and discreet, honest and sincere, active and diligent, resolute and courageous, pleasant and chearful, and universally conscientious in every event of providence, every condition of life, and in every relation wherein we stand towards God or our neighbour, and wiser and better every day; and that it will please him, to prepare us for an happy death, that we may at length enjoy the mansions of eternal happiness. The kingdom of God and his

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dies.*

righteousness being thus petitioned or sought for; we may have boldness to beg, that all other things (the necessities, the comforts, and supports of this life) may be added unto us; that we may enjoy the good things of this world, as well as be preserved from the calamities, to which we are constantly subject: and let all our petitions conclude with some ejaculation, like this, expressive of our humbleness of heart; 'Lord, thou hast given us many, and exceeding great and precious, promises; which are all certain in Christ: therefore, be it now unto thy servant according to thy word!'

The *third* part of prayer is Deprecation; which is a praying to God, that he may turn away from us some evil either of sin or punishment. We

Of sin.

Of punishment..

are to pray, against the evil of sin; especially, when we are most in danger of falling into it: and against the evil, both of spiritual and temporal punishment; with this caution, to be earnest in our prayers, that God be not angry with us, nor withdraw his grace, nor punish us with eternal damnation. But, in temporal afflictions, we must also pray with resignation to his divine will, according to the example of our blessed Saviour; who, under the greatest afflictions, said, 'Not my will, but *thine* be done!'

A *fourth* part of prayer is Intercession, or praying for others. The Apostle hath commanded us, to make supplications for all saints; that all men

men may be saved, by the knowledge of the truth; that God may convince and convert all atheists, deists, infidels, and all others, who are out of the way of truth, scoff at his word and ordinances, and disgrace christianity by their vice and immorality; that he forsake not or forget our nation, in time of public dangers and distress; that he continue among us the gospel in its purity, and the means of Grace according to his own holy ordinance; that he continue our outward peace and tranquillity, liberty and plenty; that he prosper our trade, and bless the fruits of the earth for our use; that he protect and preserve all those, to whom we bear any relation, as our king, and all his royal family, our parents, husbands, wives, children, friends, benefactors, &c. that he may teach our senators wisdom; and give his spirit of wisdom, understanding, and justice, to all who are employed in public affairs, or are appointed to execute justice, or to instruct others in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ: that he may bless all sorts and conditions of men, whether young or old, rich or poor; setting out into the world, or in long possession thereof; those, who are prosperous in this world, or such as are under afflictions; those who hate, as well as those who love us.

In the *last* place we must also gratefully acknowledge his goodness towards us: which acknowledgment, though it can add nothing to his glory, he is pleased to accept of, and reckons himself glorified by; if it come from an *Praise and thanksgiving.* heart, humbly sensible of its own unworthiness to receive any favour from him; and if it value the gifts, and love the giver of them all. We must thank him for all his mercies, both spiritual and temporal, to us and all mankind in general, for all his goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men: and in particular, for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings we have received at his hands; but above all, for his inestimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hopes of glory, in the world to come.

II. The next thing to be considered is, **WHERE** we ought to pray. It is our duty to pray, both in public and private. Those prayers are most acceptable to God, and most necessary for us, which are offered in public assemblies; because they have these advantages, above private devotions, that God is most honoured and glorified by such addresses: a sense of his majesty is maintained in the world, somewhat suitable to his most excellent greatness and goodness; when, by outward signs and tokens, we publish and declare the inward regard and esteem we have for his divine attributes. Private prayer is piety, confined within our own breasts only; but public prayer is piety, exemplified and displayed in our outward actions: it is the beauty of holiness, made visible; by it our light shines out before men, and in the eye of the world; it enlarges the interests of godliness, and keeps up a face and sense of religion among mankind. Our Saviour promises his special presence, to such assemblies; and hath appointed a particular order of men, to offer up our prayers in such places of worship. Besides, we may expect greater success, when our petitions are made with the joint and unanimous consent of our fellow-christians; and when our devotions receive warmth and heat, from the exemplary zeal of pious ministers. Whoever thinks justly must be sensible, that private religion never did in fact subsist, but where some public profession of it was regularly kept up: he must be sensible, that if public worship were once discontinued, an universal forgetfulness of that God would ensue; whom to remember, is the strongest fence and preservative against vice: and, that the bulk of mankind would soon degenerate, into mere savages and barbarians; if there were not stated days, to call them off from the common business of life, to attend to, what is the most important business of all, their salvation in the next. These considerations should make all good christians frequently attend the public worship in the house of God. It is to be wished therefore, they, who have opportunities, and are not lawfully hindered, would endeavour so to regulate their time, as to be able to attend constantly on prayer at church: for, as those, who have leisure, can not better employ it; so they

Sund. 7.] *Of Public and Family Prayer.* 173

they must have but little concern for the honour and glory of God, who neglect such opportunities of declaring and publishing his praise before men. In a word, public worship is the great instrument of securing a sense of God's providence, and of a world to come; and a sense of God's providence and a world to come, is the great basis of all social and private duties. One thing more, I beg leave to mention: though you be a regular attendant on the service of the church, take care, that your deportment out of church be correspondent to your behaviour in it: otherwise, you will do religion more disservice, than if you were its open and avowed enemy.

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after pub-
lic prayers.*

The next christian duty is *family Prayer*. Every master of a family is answerable to God, for the welfare of those souls, which are under his care: neither can I well understand, how a sense of religion can be maintained in a family, without the exercise of daily devotion in it. Families are but little societies, as societies are larger families: Religion therefore, which is confessedly the best bond and cement of union in states and larger communities, is likewise so in little domestic governments. It is therefore incumbent upon those, who preside over a family, to impress a sense of religion upon those who are beneath them: by this method we are best able, to confirm and establish children and servants in the practice of their christian obligations. If then you would have your children to be dutiful; and your servants faithful; if you desire, your small community here should join hereafter with the great congregation of men and angels in heaven; be sure to cultivate the spot of ground committed to your care: reach them, to look up to God in every step of their conduct; impress upon them, and keep alive in them, by repeated prayers, a manly, serious, and devout frame of mind. From a neglect of doing this, it comes to pass, that our youth (as soon as they launch out into the world) fall an easy, defenceless prey to those professors of iniquity, who go about, seeking whom they may devour: that they become apostates, from the best religion the world was ever blessed with, to no religion at all; and that those, who

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prayer.*

should be the flower of the nation, are too often the very dregs of it. This devotion must be also remembered at our meals: for we ought to beg the blessing of God, upon those good creatures provided for our use; since it is, by the word of God and prayer, that they are sanctified to us. Natural religion itself reaches us, to acknowledge thankfully the benefits we receive: this particular instance of it hath sufficient ground, from the example of Christ and his holy Apostles; all the Evangelists declaring, that our Saviour blessed and gave thanks before meat; the same, St. Luke relates of St. Paul; and even St. Paul himself speaks of it, as the known practice of the christian church in his time.

III. But this performance of public prayer can by no means excuse a man, from the other duty of *private Prayer*; that praying to our Father in secret, which is commanded by our Saviour, and to which in particular he has promised a reward. When a man approaches God in private, he ought to be more particular, according to his pressing necessities, than it may be convenient for him to express himself in public. This duty God hath established, as a means, whereby we are to obtain whatever we want in relation to our souls and bodies: we are to ask, before it shall be given; we must seek, before we shall find; we must knock, before it will be opened unto us. The mind of man naturally affects independance: to check this temper, God has obliged us, to ask for the assistance of his holy Spirit; that our being obliged to ask, may continually remind us of (what we are very apt to forget) our dependance on him, for our spiritual, as well as natural abilities. Were, indeed, what we receive, a matter of strict debt; then we might say, 'Who is the Lord, that we should pray unto him?' But, as our enjoyments are the gifts of his undeserved mercy, it becomes us to ask, if we would receive. What we could receive without petitioning for it, we should look upon as entirely our own acquisition, exclusively of our Maker. This seems to be the most obvious reason, why God has annexed the promises of his grace to the performance of this condition: that prayer might be a perpetual memorial, of our reli-

reliance on him ; calling us to such a state of humility, that, whenever we do well, we should, in the words of the Psalmist, make this acknowledgment : ‘ Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord ; but, unto thy name, be ascribed the glory.’ And, whenever we do ill, we should, in the words of Daniel, make this confession : ‘ To thee, O Lord, belongeth righteousness ; but unto us confusion of face.’

God hath promised the assistance of his holy Spirit, to help us in our prayers ; and hath appointed his Son, to intercede by virtue of his merits for their admission : it is absolutely necessary therefore, that we should live in the constant exercise of prayer ; and in so doing we cannot fail of attaining the end we aim at, our souls salvation : but none can be virtuous, who live without praying. Let people boast ever so much, of the great effects of a good resolution ; they must at last confess, there is no getting such a victory over their lusts and corruptions, no living such a christian life, as the gospel requires of us ; without the practice of earnest and ardent prayer to God, and a constant attendance to reading and meditation, and other such-like devout exercises. Though we have formed our purposes (as we think) ever so strongly, and doubt not to be able to resist every temptation ; yet if we do not daily apply ourselves to the throne of grace for strength and influence and support, there can be little hopes of our making any great progress or advancement in christianity : but, on the contrary, it is much to be feared, that such a neglect will bring us insensibly into a state of carelessness and indifferency to these matters ; if not entirely to a worldly, sensual, or vicious life.

Here let it be remarked, that our whole duty is made up but of three things : that a man live soberly, with respect to himself ; righteously, with respect to his neighbour ; and piously, with respect to God. *Its necessity.* Supposing now, that a man takes care of doing his duty to himself and his neighbour ; yet, if he make no conscience of piety towards God ; how can this man be said, to have done his duty, or to live virtuously ? As to a third part of his duty, he is a notorious offender : though he be not unjust, though he

be not debauched ; yet, wanting piety towards God, he is impious ; and this will as certainly damn him, as either of the other sins. Either one of these two things must be made appear, then ; that there may be such virtue, as will recommend us to God, without piety ; or that there may be piety, without ever praying to God, or worshipping him ; neither of which, I believe, was ever imagined : or it will follow, that, where there is no praying, there is no virtue ; and consequently no salvation for such, as neglect that duty. Devotion is as necessary, to preserve the union between the soul and God, in which our spiritual life consists ; as meat and drink, to preserve the union of our souls and bodies, by which our natural life is supported ; and we may every whit as reasonably expect, to keep our bodies alive, without the constant and daily use of eating and drinking ; as we can expect, to keep our souls alive to God, without the constant and daily exercise of prayer. As to the proper time, *When to be used.* in which this duty ought to be more particularly performed ; that must be regulated, according to the leisure every one can find from the duty of his necessary business or calling : yet this duty should never be neglected, morning and evening ; and we may all lift up our hearts to God in some pious ejaculation, in every work throughout the whole day.

The benefits and advantages, which accrue to us from prayer, are innumerable. It is impossible, *The benefits of prayer.* they should long continue in bad habits, who make a conscience of saying their prayers frequently and heartily, and continue so to do ; though they be not good at present : they will at last certainly get the victory over all their lusts, and attain to the favour of God, and their own salvation. Prayer is the most proper means, to ennoble, refine, and spiritualize our natures, in the new birth. If our daily converse with material objects were not balanced by prayer, it would make us wholly sensual ; and the flesh would destroy the works of the spirit : the constant exercise of prayer is therefore the best method, to get the mastery of our evil inclinations, and to overcome our vicious customs : by this we preserve in our minds a lively sense of

our duty; and are fortified against many temptations, which continually assault our souls and bodies: by this our souls are raised above this world, and spiritual objects are made familiar to us; by this our affections are sanctified, and we are supported under the calamities and crosses of this life; and by this we are gradually led to the perfection of christian piety, and preserved in a strict union between God and our souls, in which consists our spiritual life: every vice is checked, and every virtue kept alive, by a fixed awakened sense of the Deity, by a due regard and fear of him. Prayer secures the blessing of God, both upon our persons and upon our labours, upon our basket and store, upon our families and employments; and upon all that we do, or have, or desire: it turns all the actions of our natural and civil life, however indifferent they be, into actions of religious worship; and by it, every thing we have is made a blessing, which without it (perhaps) might have been an affliction and cross to us. It is true, God will grant us what is fit; but then it is as true, it is not fit he should prostitute his favours upon those, who will not pray for them with an humble sense of their dependance, and receive them with a grateful sense of his goodness. In fine, without prayer, we in vain pretend to discharge those duties, which are incumbent upon us as christians: or to prosper in our temporal affairs, which must have God's blessing to crown them with advantage to us: for it is by prayer alone, that every thing and every action is sanctified to believers.

Prayer requires no labour: the feeblest and most dispirited (who can but lift up their hearts to heaven, and direct their wishes thither) may perform *its ease.* this duty as effectually, as the most vigorous. This duty doth not oppose any natural inclination, nor put the body to any pain or inconveniency; it puts us to no charge or expence, save that of our thoughts, which are hereby fixed on things in heaven; it in no wise consumes our time, for we may attend this work, when we are doing the business of our calling: so that there is no objection against it; it is one of the most easy, natural, and inoffensive duties, that God enjoins his creatures. Besides, it is the most pleasant and delightful exercise of all the pleasures

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tures of the soul. We may talk of pleasures and enjoyments; but no man ever truly found them, till he became acquainted with God, and was made sensible of his love, and partaker of his spiritual favours, and lived in an entire friendship and communion with him; which is chiefly, if not only, both expressed and maintained by prayer and other exercises of a devout and spiritual life. There

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ing other-
wise.*

can be therefore no better reason assigned, for the great neglect of this duty; than either a lustful heart, which confines its desires and hopes within the narrow bounds of carnal pleasures, and the dross of a perishable world; or a want of practising, or using thereof: for there are many things, which seem uneasy at the first trial, which by custom become delightful.

SUNDAY VII. PART II.

IV. Let our prayers be ever so frequent and fervent,

*The requi-
sites of
prayer.*

they must be rightly qualified: and the requisites or conditions of prayer are either such, as concern the matter of our prayers, or the things we are to pray for; or such, as concern the manner of our prayers, or the qualifications with which they are to be attended.

First, the things, we ask, must be such as are lawful, and agreeable to the will of God. Now, whatsoever is not just, is not agreeable to the will of God, and consequently ought not to be prayed for: as for example, to pray

*To ask no-
thing un-
lawful.*

for revenge upon our enemies, to desire God to prosper us in our wicked courses, and the like, is not lawful. Again, things may be very just in themselves, but yet it will be very unjust in us to ask them: namely, when we ask good things, but to evil purposes; then we ask and receive not, because we ask amiss: and why so? Because, we ask, that we may consume them upon our lusts. Again, the matter of our prayers may be lawful in itself, and we may ask with honest and innocent designs; and yet the things we ask, may not be according to God's will: because God perhaps sees, they are not convenient for us; or he sees, that some other things will better suit our

our circumstances of body or soul. This is the case of all worldly blessings, commonly so called.

Secondly, we must ask in Faith. This is a condition, ordered by our Saviour to his Apostles: *To ask in*
'All things, (saith he) whatsoever ye shall *ask in*
'ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.' *faith.*

Praying with Faith implies no more, than praying with a hearty belief; both that God is able, to grant the requests I put to him; and that for the sake of Jesus Christ, he will do it, if it be for his glory and my good, and if I perform all the conditions required on my part towards the obtaining thereof: so that, to pray in faith, is to pray to God with a full purpose of heart (let what will come) to believe and to live like a christian; not to use any indirect means, or to depart from the sincerity of my christian profession, for the gaining even of the whole world. These conditions must be accompanied with constancy and perseverance.

Thirdly, our prayer should be always offered up in a humble acknowledgment of our own unworthiness. The proud, and those who are full *With humility.*
of themselves, are the most unfit for prayer, and the most offensive to God. When they make addresses to him in any manner, he resisteth them; he beholdeth them afar off (as the scripture expresseth it) with an eye of scorn; but he giveth grace to the humble; nor will he despise the broken and the contrite heart. We may put up our requests, for any lawful thing; but then it must constantly be with this condition; that God sees it fit for us, and it be agreeable to the will of his divine majesty: however, we may peremptorily ask all spiritual blessings in particular; and be assured, if the other requisites of our prayer do occur, we shall obtain them. At all times our great care should be, to endeavour to dispossess all wandering thoughts at the time *With attention.*
of devotion; else it is drawing near to God with our lips, when our hearts are far from him: but they, who thus slight and despise the dreadful majesty of God they come before, will more likely bring a curse, than a blessing, upon themselves. But if this cannot be perfectly done, let not a few interruptions damp a truly devout prayer: for, considering

sidering the frame and constitution of our natures, and the close connection between soul and body; when we are at our prayers, our thoughts may be diverted, and our intentions interrupted, by the impressions of study or business of this world. Some weak men of a sanguine complexion are apt to be elated, upon the account of those short-lived raptures and transient gleams of joy, which they feel within themselves; and others of a phlegmatic constitution, to despond, because they cannot work themselves up to such a degree of fervour: Whereas nothing is more precarious and uncertain, than that affection, which depends upon the ferment of the blood: it naturally ceases as soon, as the spirits flag and are exhausted. Men of this make, sometimes draw near to God with great fervency; and at other times are quite estranged from him: but a steady, regular, consistent piety is more acceptable to that Being, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of change; than all the passionate sallies, and short intermitting fits, of an unequal devotion. Therefore, all we can do, is to watch and strive against these distractions, to bewail this weakness; and to

Watchfulness.

Distractions, when criminal.

compose our thoughts to all that seriousness, our temper and circumstances will permit; to recal our minds as soon, as we perceive they run out upon other objects; and immediately to throw away all such thoughts, as are foreign to our devotions; and to beg God's pardon and assistance: remembering always that these distractions are then only criminal, when we willingly entertain them; when we indulge ourselves, in thinking upon other objects without restraint; when we keep our unreasonable passions under no government, and take no care to compose ourselves into a serious temper, by considering in whose awful presence we appear, when at our devotions.

Fourthly, Our hearts must be possessed with a deep sense of God's majesty, which is infinite and incomprehensible: let it be deeply impressed upon our minds, that we pray to no less a person, than the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; who was from everlasting, and is to ever-

With a sense of God's majesty.

everlasting, world without end : and then (to pray as we should) we ought more particularly, to get our hearts possessed with a sense of his Goodness. This is that, which (above all other things) will put life and vigour into our prayers ; will both stir us up to this duty, and support us in the performance thereof. He, who cometh to God, must believe that he is ; and that he is the rewarder of them, who diligently seek him.

And goodness.

Fifthly, We must endeavour to get our minds seriously affected with a sense of our manifold wants ; for otherwise, it is impossible we should heartily pray for redress and supply : therefore, if we desire to bring ourselves to a fit temper for prayer, we must often take an account of the state of our souls ; and examine, what necessities we have to be supplied, what sins to be pardoned, what evil affections to be mortified, what virtues and graces of the Holy Spirit to be attained for our strength and support.

With a sense of our wants.

Sixthly, All these conditions must be accompanied with great Fervour and Constancy : that is, we must, in the most hearty, serious, and affectionate manner, put up our requests to God for his aid ; and likewise, in so doing, we must persevere to the end.

With zeal.

Seventhly, It is also required of us, for the preparing and disposing us, to put up our prayers as we should ; that we purify our hearts from all actual affection to sin ; that we come not to God, with any of our wickednesses about us ; but that we put them away from us, at least in purpose and desire. The necessity of this requisite is so great, that there is no praying, where it is wanting : for, if I incline unto wickedness with my heart, the Lord will not hear me. We know, that God heareth not sinners ; but, if any man be a doer of his will, he will hear him. Therefore, till we seriously resolve, to quit our evil courses ; and to forsake every known, wilful, open sin, we are conscious to ourselves we live in ; let us not think ourselves prepared and qualified, to put up our prayers to God, who will not be mocked.

With purity.

Lastly,

Lastly, To all these requisites we must also add that
Of bodily worship of the Body, which is particularly
worship. exhorted by the royal Psalmist; where he
 says, 'O come, let us worship, and fall
 'down, and kneel, before the Lord our maker!' which
 necessarily implies, that the just and devout meaning of
 our souls should be expressed by suitable, humble, and
 reverent gestures of the body, in our approaches or
 prayers to God: therefore the Apostle, knowing this
 tribute also is due from the body of man to the creator;
 commands us, 'to glorify God in our body and in our
 'spirit, which are God's.' 1 Cor. vi. 20.

V. By this account we have given of prayer, it ap-
God must be pears, that it is not only a duty, we owe
the only ob- to God; but that it is a duty, we owe to
ject of our him alone; and that no Being in the world,
prayers. besides himself, hath a right to be prayed
 unto: for, if Prayer be one of the principal
 instances of that honour, and an expression of that de-
 pendance, we owe to the Creator and Governour of the
 world; then certainly, to be prayed unto, is, and for
 ever will be, one of the rights and prerogatives of his
 Sovereign Majesty, never to be given to any thing crea-
 ted. Consequently, to invoke or pray to any creature in
 a religious way (though it be the highest creature in hea-
 ven, whether angel or saint; not excepting the blessed
 Virgin herself) must needs be an affront to God, as gi-
 ving that honour to one of his creatures, which is only
 proper to the Creator. Idolatry naturally leads to other
 immoralities; and, when men like not to retain God in
 their knowledge, they are very apt to be given over to a
 reprobate mind: besides, will-worship, of what kind
 soever, evidently derogates from the honour of God;
 distracting men's devotions; dividing that affection and
 reliance of mind, which ought to be placed upon God
 alone; and always leading to superstitious equivalents,
 in the stead of true virtue, which alone can render men
 acceptable in the eyes of the all-seeing Judge. Should
 any one pretend to say, that sinful men cannot of them-
 selves acceptably approach the supreme throne of God;
 we have by divine appointment, a sufficient mediator
 and advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righte-
 ous;

Sund. 7.] *The Power and Efficacy of Prayer.* 183

ous; who sitteth continually on the right-hand of God, as our great high-priest and intercessor, to mediate for us, and to offer up our prayers unto the Father; through him we have access unto the Father: and he has assured you, that 'Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in his name, he will give it you.' Prayer therefore is to be directed to God alone, through Christ alone: for, as praying to false Gods derogates from the honour of the one true God; so praying by or through the intercession of false and fictitious mediators, derogates in like manner, from the honour of Christ, the only true mediator. for, as there is but one God, so there is also but one mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus.

As an encouragement for us to pray, David says, 'The Lord is nigh unto all them, that call upon him in truth; he will fulfil the desires of them, that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will help them: the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.' Our Saviour also saith to his Apostles; 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do:' and again he repeats it; 'If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.' Yet, if it should be thought, this promise was made to the Apostles only, and doth not concern us; let us hear, what St. John writes to us: 'Brethren, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God; and, whatsoever we ask, we receive of him.' 'Ask (saith Christ) and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one, that asketh, receiveth; and he, that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.' Nothing can be more gracious, nothing more comfortable, than this promise; which is still most pathetically enforced by our Saviour, in the following verse. 'What man is there among you; whom if his Son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things, unto them that ask him?' Besides, the holy scriptures not only

*The power
and efficacy
of prayer.*

only contain many promises and assurances, that God will hear our prayers; but afford us many instances, of his making good those promises, at all times and to all persons; and that in a most wonderful manner: by prayer Moses quenched the devouring fire; by prayer Elias brought down fire from heaven; by prayer Elisha restored the dead to life; by prayer Hezekiah slew an hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians in one night; by prayer David stopped the avenging angel, when his hand was lifted up to destroy Jerusalem; and by prayer Jonah was delivered out of the fish's belly.

Notwithstanding the advantage and necessity of prayer; nay, though God hath absolutely declared, that we shall not have the good things we stand in need of, except we pray for them: yet, there have been, and doubtless are still, some emissaries of the devil; who pretend to argue against the duty and efficacy of prayer, founding their philosophy upon the unchangeable decrees of God;

Objection I. and devil-like, quote scripture, to support their own impiety. 'Is it not written,

'(say they) that *with God there is no variableness nor shadow of turning?*' This is a mere fallacy.

Answer I. God's hearkening to, or being moved by, the prayers we put up to him, doth not in the least clash with his unchangeable decrees. We grant, that, when God is pleased to give us those things, which without our prayers he would not, there is a change; but, not in God: for God resolved, that, if we humbly and heartily beg such things at his hands, we should have them; but if not, we should go without what we want. Therefore, when upon our prayers we obtain that grace, or that blessing, which we had not before; it is not, that He is changed, but we: We, by performing the conditions he required of us, and looking with another aspect to him; do entitle ourselves to quite different treatment from him; than we could claim, before we were changed from our wicked course of life; by making ourselves capable of receiving those benefits, whereof we were not capable before.

When.

When this objection has failed, then they rest upon God's infinite and essential Goodness. We grant, the Goodness of God is infinite; and that he governs the world in the best way, that is possible; and consequently, will always do that, which is best, let us behave ever so badly: yet doth it hence follow, that we shall have all such things, as we stand in need of, without praying for them? No. The same God, (who will always do, what is absolutely best for his creatures) knows, it is best for them, that, to partake of his benefits, they pray for them; and, if they do not, he knows it best, they should be denied such things: the necessity (therefore) of God's acting for the best, doth not in the least destroy the necessity of prayer. God certainly will always do that, which is best: but we are mistaken, if we think it best, that we should have our necessities supplied, without the use of prayer; because it is the means, appointed by God, for obtaining them.

Objection II.

Answer II.

VI. To prayer, it is necessary, to subjoin the duty of REPENTANCE; which St. Paul particularly testifies, to be due to God: because, all sin is forbidden of God; and we never transgress his commands, whether in regard to our neighbour or ourselves, but we incur his displeasure; and must dread his justice, except we repent. 'Wherefore (says the church) the grant of Repentance is not to be denied to such, as fall into sin after baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and, by the grace of God, we may rise again, and amend our lives: and therefore, they are to be condemned; which say, "They can no more sin, as long as they live here:" or deny the place of forgiveness to such, as truly repent.'

Repentance.

Repentance is an entire change of heart and mind, which produces the like change in our lives and conversations: so that, to repent of our sins, is to be convinced, that we have done amiss: whence follows hearty sorrow, for

A turning from sin to God.

having

* See the 16th article of Religion.

having foolishly neglected the most important concern of our lives, and done what in us lies to make ourselves everlastingly miserable; that we have been ungrateful to our mighty benefactor, and unfaithful to our best friend; that we have affronted heaven, with those very blessings we have received from thence; and that we have despised the riches of God's goodness and forbearance, and long suffering, which should have led us to a thorough change of our life and conversation. This sorrow for our sins must be expressed, by humbly confessing them to almighty God, with shame and confusion of face; by an utter abhorrence and detestation of them; by being heartily troubled, for what we have done amiss, and resolving not to do the like any more; and by testifying the reality of our inward sorrow, by all those ways we find naturally occur in other cases which afflict us; namely, in fasting, weeping, mourning, and praying: for it is very fit, that as the soul and body have been partakers in the same sins, so they should join together in the same humiliation and firm resolution of amendment.

All sorrow for sin, and all purposes of amendment for the time to come, are not in all cases sufficient, to be properly called Repentance, or an hearty Contrition: because, if this sorrow and purpose of amendment arise, not from a pure love of God, and a deep sense of our own soul ingratitude in offending so good and gracious a being; but from a dread of his justice, and the fear of being punished for transgressions; our Repentance and good purposes, though they carry with them the appearance of ever so much truth and reality, ought justly to be suspected, as insufficient. This duty therefore does not only hence appear to be necessary, but strongly enforced (even with the authority of a command) in our Saviour's declaration, that, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' Luke xiii. 5.

The best method, to make such a resolution of amendment effectual, is to extend it, to all the particulars of our duty; obliging ourselves, to have a respect to all God's commands, and to avoid every thing his law condemns. Thus true repentance

Sund. 7.] *Repentance not to be delayed.* 187

pentance must be pure, constant, persevering in its effects; that is, it must put a man into such a state, as that he will not any more return wilfully unto sin. He therefore, who repents, ought to be infinitely fearful of relapsing into sin; as one recovering out of a dangerous and almost mortal sickness: for, whenever he wilfully relapses, he makes his case worse, than it was at first, and his disease more in danger of being mortal: it becomes much harder for him, to renew himself unto repentance, and much more difficult to procure pardon. It is true, evil habits are not to be rooted out at once, nor vicious customs to be overcome in a moment: so long, therefore, as a man does not return wilfully and deliberately into the habit of sin; many surprises and interruptions, in the struggle with a customary vice, may be consistent with the progress of repentance: but it is then only, it becomes complete and effectual; when the evil habit is so entirely rooted out, that the man thence-forward obey the commandments of God, without looking back; and returns no more, to the sins he has condemned. Let no man therefore think, he has truly repented of any deadly sin; so long, as he continues to practise and repeat it: he may fast, and pray, and lament, and use all the apparent signs of repentance imaginable; but God will never esteem his repentance true, nor accept it as available to the forgiveness of sin; until he see it pure, and constant, and persevering.

*It must be
pure, con-
stant, and
persever-
ing.*

Man has not the power of his own life; and should he be cut off in the midst of his sins, he must be eternally punished. It is mere delusion therefore, and an unpardonable stupidity, to delay the great and necessary work of repentance, for the present; and defer it, to some future opportunity; either until the heat of youth be over; or until sickness, old age, or death overtake us. It is, not only the greatest folly imaginable, to venture a matter of such consequence, upon such an uncertainty as future time, which we can never be sure of; and to defer a necessary work, to the most unfitting season of performing it: but it is highly wicked also; in that we abuse God's patience,

*Must not be
delayed.*

tience, who gives time and opportunity for it at present ; and prefer the slavery of sin, before his service. It is a contempt of his laws, and of that wrath, which is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness : so that we may justly fear, that such a proceeding may provoke God to withdraw that grace, which will then be necessary for the exercise of our repentance ; though he should give us time and opportunity, for so great a work. This is a melancholy consideration : and what shall I do, to awaken men out of this fatal lethargy, and to inspire them with a just sense of their danger ; but entreat them to consider, that unless they repent, they will certainly perish ? Through the times of ignorance, God winked : but now he commandeth all men every where, to repent ; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man, whom he hath ordained ; a day, wherein sinners will in vain call to the mountains and rocks, to fall on them and hide them : when that dreadful sentence shall be pronounced ; ‘ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels !’ This is sufficient, to shew us the great necessity of denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and of living righteously, soberly and godly in this present world.

Hence we may conclude (concerning the times and frequent returns of our repentance) that, if we be daily guilty of sin, we should every day repent ; because, sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. We may be instructed in this custom, by the children of this world in the management of their temporal concerns : they teach us, that short reckonings are the safest means to a fair and unperplexed account. We should therefore repent, before all solemn days, the blessed sacrament, &c. The time of affliction is a strong call to repentance : when sickness, or pains, or outward calamities, or a wounded spirit, attack us, we are soon sensible of our own inability ; and whither should we fly, for refuge ? ‘ Break off thy sins by repentance, says Daniel ; lest thou be punished with those, who despise the chastisements of the Lord.’

The approach of Death is the most awakening season for repentance; and I fear most men's repentance sets sail from this dangerous port. Not, that we pretend to set bounds to the goodness and mercy of that Lord; who declares that he will not the death of a sinner: whenever a soul is raised from the sleep of sin, it must be ascribed unto the Spirit of God, calling her to repentance; it would (consequently) be rash and dangerous for us, to assert the impossibility of a death-bed repentance: yet it is certain, that, without a particular grace of God, no man will be able to repent upon his death-bed; and it is no way reasonable, to expect these extraordinary influences, when the ordinary means of grace have been neglected all our life long.

*Death-bed
repentance.*

*The danger
of deferring
Repentance
until death.*

He, who long pursues a vicious course, and returns not, until the latter end of his days; must never expect (though he be ever so diligent and sincere in his religion) either to live or die in so great peace, or in so assured a prospect of being happy in the other world; as he who begins betimes: all his hopes will be mingled, with sad fears of his condition; the sense of the many grievous sins of his life, so long persisted in, will still be afflicting his conscience; and he will still be doubtful, whether he hath sufficiently repented of them, and whether God hath received him to favour. This is the unavoidable consequence, of putting off the business of repentance to our latter days.

It is to be feared, and it is highly probable, whoever defers it until that time, will never repent at all; or if he do, his penitential resolutions (being founded upon such temporary principles, as the fear of death, and the absence of temptation) will seldom prove strong and vigorous enough, to produce a thorough reformation: this is plain, in the case of those, who recover; among whom there are very few, true and constant to the purposes of amendment, which they formed upon the prospect of approaching death. Therefore make no delay, in this great and necessary work; for, there can be no repentance in the grave: and we are taught by the church, that 'The Romish doctrine, con-

*The disadvantages of
a Death-bed repentance.*

No Purgatory, nor repentance in the grave.

'cerning

cerning purgatory, pardons, and invocation of saints, is a fond thing; vainly intended, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.*

Length of time will add strength to thy evil inclinations, and weaken thy good resolutions. Can the man,

Custom of sin.

who has all his life cherished sin in his bosom, and wilfully neglected (if not abhorred)

God and his means of grace: can he ever hope, to be so thoroughly changed in a moment; as to hate sin effectually, and turn unto the God of his salvation with all his heart? Or again; what hopes can a man

Bodily pain.

entertain, that he shall find time and opportunity for this necessary duty; when the little remains of life are filled up, with continual distractions and afflictions; the necessary effects of those diseases, which commonly bring us to the grave?

VII. To the duty of repentance, is commonly joined (in scripture) the duty of FASTING: we shall therefore act most prudently and safely, in

Fasting.

conforming thereto. Fasting, in a strict sense, implies a total abstinence, from all meat and drink, the whole day, from morning to evening; and that our refreshment then be, sparing as to the quantity, and not delicate as to the quality, of the nourishment: but, in a large sense, Fasting implies an abstinence from some kind of food, especially from flesh and wine; or a deferring our meals beyond the usual hours; as the primitive Christians did, on their set days, until three in the afternoon, to which hour in those days, their public assemblies continued. By this mortification, some Self-denial is designed to our

A revenge upon ourselves.

bodily appetites: for no abstinence can partake of the nature of fasting, except there be something in it which afflicts us; and nature seems to suggest it, as the proper means of expressing sorrow and grief, and as a fit method of disposing our minds towards the consideration of any thing serious. All nations have therefore (from the earliest times) used Fasting, as a part of repentance, and as the means of turning away God's anger: as it is plain, in the

* See the 22d Article of Religion.

the case of the Ninevites, this was a notion, common to them with the rest of mankind. Although our Saviour hath left no positive precept, about Fasting; yet he joins it to almsgiving and prayer, which are unquestionable duties: and the directions he gave, in his admirable sermon upon the mount, concerning the performance of it, sufficiently suppose the necessity of the duty; which (if governed by such rules, as our Saviour there lays down) will be accepted by God, and openly rewarded by him, when he judges us according to our works.

The ancient christians were therefore very exact, both in their weekly and yearly fasts: their weekly fasts were kept on Wednesdays and Fridays; because our Lord was, on the one betrayed, and on the other crucified, for our sins. But no fast may be accounted religious, except such, as is undertaken, to restrain the looser appetites of the flesh, and keep the body in subjection; to give the mind liberty and ability, to consider and reflect, while it is actually engaged in divine service, or preparing for some solemn part of it; to humble ourselves before God, under a due sense of our sins, and of the misery to which they expose us; to turn away his anger, and to supplicate for his mercy and favour: to express revenge against ourselves, for the abuse of those good things God alloweth us to enjoy, and whereof we have by sinful excesses made ourselves unworthy: when it is used, as a piece of self-denial, for the better command of our fleshly appetites; and as the means of raising in our minds a due valuation of the happiness of the other world, when we despise the enjoyments of this. Above all (to make it acceptable to God) it should be accompanied with fervent prayer, and a charitable relief of the poor; whose miseries we may the better guess at, when we feel some of the inconveniences of hunger: but we should always take care, to avoid presumption; and never fast under a supposition, that we merit thereby; nor in such an extreme manner, as may prejudice our health, or indispose us for the service

At what time observed, by the ancient christians.

When acceptable to God; yet no satisfaction for sins.

*Works of
Superero-
gation are
sinful.*

vice of God. The church assures us, that
 ‘ Voluntary works besides, over and above
 ‘ God’s commandments, which are called
 ‘ works of *Supererogation*, cannot be taught
 ‘ without arrogancy and impiety: for by
 ‘ them men do declare, that they do not only render
 ‘ unto God as much, as they are bound to do; but that
 ‘ they do *more* for his sake, than of bounden duty is re-
 ‘ quired: whereas Christ saith plainly; “ when you
 ‘ have done all that is commanded to you, say, *We are*
 ‘ *unprofitable servants*.”

• See the 14th Article of Religion.

THE SECOND PART

OF THE NEW

Whole Duty of Man:

CONTAINING

Our DUTY towards our NEIGHBOUR.

SUNDAY VIII.

I. *Of our duty to our NEIGHBOUR; viz. the duty of the Subjects to their Prince. II. Of the Prince to the Subjects. III. Of our duty to civil Magistrates; and of their duty, both to their Sovereign and to the People. IV. Of our duty to Pastors, and their superior education: of the King's Supremacy, &c. V. Of the duty of Children to their natural parents; to reverence, to love, and to obey them in all lawful commands, and in respect of marriage; and VI. Of going to Law with parents. VII. Of the duty of Parents to children; to instruct them, to put them to business, and to provide for them in the best manner, they are able. And VIII. In what cases they may disinherit them.*

I. **H**AVING gone through the duties of the FIRST TABLE, I shall here just remark, that the *ten Commandments* were originally delivered to *Moses*, by GOD himself, in *two Tables*. The *first Table*, containing our duty to God, consists of the *first four Commandments*; three directing, Whom we are to worship, and in what manner; and the fourth appointing a particular time, for that purpose: the *second Table* consists of the *six last Commandments*, which contain our duty towards our *Neighbour*. The first four (then) set forth our duty to God; the fifth teaches us the duty, we owe to our Superiors amongst men; and the five last declare our du-

The ten Commandments.

The first table.

The second table.

ty towards all men in general, with regard to the life, the property, the reputation of our neighbour, or whatever else may in any way affect him. I have already treated of the duties of the *first Table*; and the order, in which the Commandments stand, leads us now to consider our *Duty to our NEIGHBOUR*.

It is observable, that the importance of every duty, and the malignity of every breach of our duty, stands higher, in the catalogue of virtues and vices, according to their rank and priority in the ten commandments. Thus the sins of disbelieving God, or worshipping Idols, condemned in the first and second precepts, are more heinous crimes, than taking God's Name in vain, and breaking the Sabbath; and the sins against Heaven, prohibited in the first four commandments, are more heinous provocations, than the transgressions against Man, forbidden in the six last: again, the duties we owe to societies, or the relative duties, are fastened upon us by stronger ties, than those we owe to single persons; by reason of the extensiveness of their influence, and their general good: and we must at sight allow, that Murder is more criminal, than adultery; Adultery more criminal, than theft; Theft more criminal, than slander; and Slander worse, than coveting. From this reasoning, when we treat of the duties of the SECOND TABLE, we chuse to assign the first rank, to the *fifth* Commandment; though the author of the *Old Whole Duty of Man* has not followed this most natural and scriptural method: and, as the order of the commandments, the dictates of nature, and the ordinance of God, have placed *parental* authority at the head of the second Table, as containing the primary social and christian duties; which are most productive of peace and piety, and equally concern our civil, spiritual, and natural Parents: I intend to treat first of the relative duties, between the Prince (or civil parent) and the people.

We are commanded, to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the King, as supreme; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him.

Our duty to the King.

him. In particular kingdoms, the king is the fountain of authority, from whence all power descends upon lower magistrates ; as, in the universal monarchy of the world, God is the fountain of all power and dominion, from whom all authority and right of government descends unto princes. Since therefore, sovereigns are God's vicegerents, and reign by his authority ; *Honour.* they have also a right, to be honoured and revered by their subjects ; because they bear God's character, and do shine with the rays of his majesty : subjects, consequently, affront God's own majesty, when they contemn and vilify their sovereigns ; when they expose their faults, and uncover their nakedness, or lampoon or libel their persons and actions ; therefore never speak evil, of the ruler of thy people.

Sovereigns are ordained by God for the common good, to protect the innocent, avenge the injured ; *Assistance.* and guard the rights of their people, against foreign and domestic fraud and violence : they have therefore an undoubted right, to be aided and assisted by their subjects ; because, with- *In paying taxes or tribute.* out their aid, it will be impossible for them, to accomplish the ends of their sovereignty :

if therefore, subjects refuse, to aid their sovereign with their purses or persons, when legally required ; or, by any indirect means, withdraw themselves from his assistance, whenever his and their country's real necessities call for it ; they detain from him a just right, which is due to his character. Render therefore, unto all, their dues : Tribute, to whom tribute is due ; Custom, to whom custom ; Fear, to whom fear ; Honour, to whom honour. To tribute of money, the Apostle subjoins the tribute of Prayers : I exhort therefore, that *Prayers.* first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men ; for kings, and all in authority ; that, under them, we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty : for this is good and acceptable, in the sight of God our Saviour.

Sovereigns are to be obeyed in all things, which do not interfere with the commands of God : for, *Obedience.* in obeying them, we obey God, who com-

mands us by their mouths and wills, by their laws and proclamations: and as he, who refuses to obey the inferior magistrate's command, doth therein disobey the king himself, unless he command the contrary; so he, who disobeys his sovereign, who is God's magistrate, doth thereby disobey God; unless it be, where God hath commanded the contrary. While he commands lawful things, he hath a right to obedience; because his commands are stamped with divine authority, and are thereby rendered sacred, never to be violated.

II. These are duties, we owe to our Sovereign: there are others, which Sovereigns owe to their subjects. Sovereign power being ordained by God for the public good, to guard and defend the innocent, to shelter and relieve the oppressed, to fence and propagate true religion, to adjust and balance private rights and interests; every subject hath a

The duty of Princes. right to be thereby protected in his person and legal rights, in his just liberties and privileges, and in the sincere profession of the true religion: and that sovereign, who

To protect their subjects. doth not employ his power to these purposes; but, through wilful and affected error or ignorance, imposes a false religion on his people; or betrays, oppresses, or enslaves them himself; or permits others so to do, either out of malice or carelessness; is an injurious invader of the rights and properties of his people: and shall one day answer for it, at the tribunal of God, who is the King of kings.

III. In like manner, there is a relation of Judges and Justices, Governors of cities and provinces, and such like inferior magistrates; who, by virtue of that authority, which is stamped upon them, have a right to be honoured and

Duty to civil Magistrates. obeyed by the people, according to the degree and extent of their authority and power: for whosoever contemns the inferior magistrates, who are vested with the king's authority, doth therein contemn the king. Authority, wherever it be placed, is a sacred thing, as being a ray and image of the divine majesty; and, as such, may justly claim honour and reverence from all men: and,

and, whoever contemns the lowest degree of it, offers an affront to the highest ; for he, who resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. We are not therefore, to evade obedience, under any pretence of the unworthiness, or personal faults and defects, of the magistrates in commission : but, should consider, their authority is a sacred thing : and, as such, challenges reverence and obedience by a right, which cannot be dispensed with. To behave frowardly, stubbornly, or irreverently, towards a lawful magistrate, is to detain from him his due, and offer an unjust affront to his character : consequently, let a man be ever so good in other instances, such a rebellious behaviour will bespeak him highly dishonest and injurious, in the sight of God.

As inferior magistrates are entitled to the reverence and obedience of the people ; so their relation to the prince and people, is an obligation on *Their duty.* them to fidelity, vigilance, and justice : they are the king's trustees, for himself and his people ; *To the King.* for, in their hands he deposes the honour, security, and rights of his own crown and dominion, together with the safeguard and protection of the just and legal rights of his people ; and, by accepting the trust, they engage themselves to a faithful discharge of it : the king has therefore a right to their faithful and vigilant care, that his authority be revered, his laws obeyed ; and that his person, government, and properties be secured : the people also have a right, *To the people.* to be protected by them, in their persons, reputations, liberties, and estates. Besides, being but trustees, and deputies of frail men ; being men themselves, in authority over their fellow-creatures, and for their good ; they should command without insulting, reprove with meekness, punish unwillingly, and with manifest tokens of tenderness and compassion. If they wilfully fail, in any of these matters, towards either the king or the people ; they do unjustly detain the rights, of the king or the *How to be punished.* people, or both : they betray the trust committed to them, falsify their own engagements ; and, under the mask of authority, are public robbers of mankind ;

kind; and may, and ought to be, punished as such, by the laws they violate.

IV. A second branch of the parental authority, wherein the duties are mutual and reciprocal, is that, which regards our spiritual parents or Pastors; who discharge the like good offices to our souls, as our natural parents do to our bodies.

Duty to our Pastors. The Christians of the first ages always expressed a mighty value and esteem, for their Clergy: they were sensible, there could be no church without priests; and, that it was by their means, God conveyed to them all those inestimable blessings, which were purchased by the death of Christ. Upon the same

Esteem. account, we should think it our duty, to love them, as we are taught by the Apostle; who said to the Thessalonians, 'We beseech you, brethren, to know them, which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their works sake.'

As we are taught to honour and esteem our spiritual governors, pastors, or ministers, for their works sake; we must treat them with respect, considering them as

Respect and reverence. those, who bear the great character of ambassadors from Christ, as St. Paul calls them; and as instruments of conveying blessings to

us, the greatest we are capable of receiving, because they relate to our eternal salvation; and consequently, regarding them as commissioned by him, to that holy function: and, as the authority they have received, to preside over christians as governors of the church, must always be owned to come from God; this religious regard to their divine mission must be expressed, in the whole course of our conduct towards their persons. We should respect and reverence them, both by our words and actions; expressing all the honour and esteem, we ought to have for their character; treating their persons, with great civility in conversation; speaking all the good we can of them, in their absence; and throwing a veil, over their infirmities: never making them objects of light mirth, nor proclaiming their failings, to reproach their persons; because it may tend to debase their ministry: not using any scurrilous words, or contemptuous behaviour, towards

Sund. 8.] *The People's Duty to their Pastors.* 199

wards them ; because the disrespect, cast upon them, is an affront to their Master, whose person they represent ; as our Saviour told his disciples, when he sent them out to preach the gospel : ' He, that despiseth you despiseth me ; and he, that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.'

In ancient times, the people did not rest, in this outward behaviour ; but gave all imaginable proof, of a sincere and hearty love and esteem for their pastors ; maintaining * *Maintenance.* them liberally out of their shipwrecked fortunes, and cheerfully submitting to the severe discipline enjoined by them ; from a sense of the authority ministers have received from Christ, the great Bishop of souls ; and in pursuance of those precepts, which our Saviour and St. Paul have left us for that purpose. We must also obey our spiritual governors, not only in *Obedience.* whatsoever they declare to us from scripture, to be God's commands, either by public preaching, or by private exhortations ; because they are the messengers of the Lord of hosts, so long as their doctrines are agreeable to the word of God : we must likewise submit to the discipline they inflict, either to recover us from a state of folly, or to preserve us from falling into such a state ; from a pure sense of that right they have to command, intrusted to them by our saviour Jesus Christ ; and of that great penalty we are liable to, by our contempt : for, he that despiseth them, despiseth him that sent them. We are accordingly charged to obey them, who have the rule over us, and to submit ourselves ; because they watch for our souls, as they that must give an account : and, though we be deprived of other opportunities, of doing them any substantial service ; yet it is *Prayers for them.* in the power of the meanest of us all, to pray for them, and address heaven in their behalf ; that they may be defended, from the malice and ill-will of bad men ; that they may have the countenance and protection, of the great and powerful ; that their zealous labours in God's vineyard may be attended with success;

* See Sund. 2. Sect. ii.

and that they may turn many to righteousness, according to the gospel of Christ.

Hence we learn, that it is no diminution to greatness of birth, or any personal excellency, to be devoted to the ministration of God's holy word and sacraments. We speak here particularly, of Christianity; whose priests are the ministers of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God; to whom he hath committed the word of reconciliation, the glory of Christ; ambassadors for Christ, in Christ's stead, co-workers with him, angels of the churches: as they act by commission from him, they are his officers and immediate attendants; and, in a particular manner the servants of his house. They are employed, in his particular business; empowered and authorized to negotiate and transact for God, in all the outward administrations of the covenant of grace or of reconciliation between God and man, by commission from Jesus Christ.

They are instituted, under the gospel, to dispense spiritual food for the nourishment of Christians, to feed them with God's holy word and sacraments, to speak the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world: which is committed to their care, to be preserved entire, that they be not maimed or perverted, as the sacraments are to be rightly and duly administered to his people. For this end and purpose they were ordained by Christ himself, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; who glorified not himself, to be an high-priest; but had his commission from God the Father, and after his resurrection invested his apostles with the same commission his Father had given him before: which evidently contains an authority of ordaining others, and a power of transferring that commission upon others, so long as the world endures. Therefore, without his express commission, no man ought to take upon himself, or communicate to others, a power to sign and seal covenants in the name of Christ.

The apostles and their successors exercised this commission in all places, and even in opposition to the rulers

Sund. 8.] *The People's Duty to their Pastors.* 201

lers who then were; so that the church subsisted, as a distinct society from the state, until the fourth century. Whence we infer, a man may have exceeding good parts, and a great talent in speaking; he may have likewise attained considerable skill in the scriptures, and in other sorts of learning; and have all the other qualifications, which are needful to make him a very useful minister of the church: but still this alone, without a lawful call, doth not empower him, to take that office upon him: and whosoever comes in by any other way, is not a lawful shepherd, but an intruder into Christ's flock; whatever natural or acquired abilities he may have; to fit him for the employment. And as great purity of life is required of those, who are invested with such an honourable character; that by it they may be qualified, to administer in holy things; and by their example guide those whom they instruct by their doctrine, which is of Christ: so is it also an argument of a profane temper, to condemn those, who are commissioned by God himself to that sacred office.

What is required of them, who take orders.

Though they may be inferior to others, in some human accomplishments: yet God hath promised particularly, to assist them in the faithful discharge of their holy office; and has blessed them with many personal qualifications, to challenge our esteem and respect. As long as piety and virtue, learning and knowledge, have any credit and reputation in the world; and men are concerned, that others be formed to the same valuable principles, that their minds should be cultivated, and their manners regulated: so long will the clergy have a good title, to the honour and esteem of all those, who are truly wise and good. Did we but consider the very method of their education, we should find it would give them great advantages, for their improvement in all sorts of necessary and polite learning; and raise them above the level of those, with whom they are equal in other circumstances: the subject of their constant studies being matters of piety and religion, it is reasonable to suppose, they live under more lively and stronger impressions of the other world, than the rest of mankind; and experience sufficiently convinces us how much the nobility

Are assigned by God.

Of superior education.

and gentry of this kingdom are beholden to their care, for those impressions of piety and knowledge, which are stamped upon their education, and diffused into their families.

Their great service to men.

Even in the most ignorant ages, what learning there was, flourished in their body, and was by their care conveyed down to us: they have been, in the most dissolute times, the greatest examples of piety; and we have yet remaining many eminent monuments of their magnificent, as well as useful, charities.

Should it happen, that the ministers of God act not suitably to the dignity of their character; yet we should not condemn them: their character should defend them from contempt, and the relation they have to God secure them from ill treatment. It is therefore necessary we consider, that, as there is an inherent holiness, whereby men's actions and affections are in some measure conformable to the laws of God; in which sense good men were, in all ages, esteemed holy: so there is a relative holiness; which consists in some peculiar relation to God's service, which may be ascribed to things, times, places, and persons. Thus the tribe of Levi was called the holy tribe; as those, who are dedicated to the service of Christ under the gospel, are called Christ's ministers: not, that it was always true of them, that they walked before God in purity and piety, and turned many from iniquity; for they had too often gone out of the way, and caused many to stumble at the law: but, because they had a particular relation to God, in the performance of that worship, which was then paid to him by his appointment.

Their evil lives should not deter us from our duty.

Should we allow the objection, that many ministers are obnoxious, for their wicked lives: What then? Does their wickedness make void the ordinances of God? No: For (as the church teacheth) 'Although in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments: yet, forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority; we may use their ministry, both in hearing the word of God, and in the receiving of the sacraments.'

Sund. 8.] *The People's Duty to their Pastors.* 203

'ments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken
'away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's
'gifts diminished from such, as by faith, and rightly do
'receive the sacraments ministered unto them ; which be
'effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise,
'although they be ministered by evil men.* We may
compare this, to a pardon passed by an immoral king,
or a sentence pronounced by a wicked judge ; which are
always looked upon as valid, to all intents and purposes ;
because their efficacy depends, not upon the qualificati-
ons of those in commission, but upon the sovereign au-
thority, from which they both receive their commission
so to do. In like manner, the advantages we receive by
their ministrations, and the relation they have to God,
should still preserve some respect for the persons, even of
bad ministers : as long therefore, as ministers are cloathed
with flesh and blood, as well as other men ; we ought not
to be prejudiced against religion, because some few are
overcome by the follies and infirmities common to man-
kind.

When we have indeed, full information, and glaring
proofs, of their scandalous lives ; it is doubt-
less a better demonstration of christian zeal, *How we*
to make proper complaint of wicked pastors, *must behave*
before their lawful superiors ; that, being *towards*
found guilty, they may by just judgment *such.*
be deposed, than either by our words or actions, to
affront or condemn them ourselves, or to provoke others
so to do. The despising the persons, and exposing the
conduct of our pastors, diminishes that credit and effect,
which their spiritual administrations ought to have upon
the minds of men ; and makes them less capable of doing
that good, which their profession obliges them to endea-
vour : for, as much as we take from the opinion of their
piety and integrity, so much we lessen their power in pro-
moting the interest of religion ; the fate whereof de-
pends very much upon the reputation of those, who feed
and govern the flock of Christ Jesus. The enemies of
religion, sensible of this, omit no opportunity of exposing
their persons, and representing their sacred function only

as

* See the 26th Article of Religion.

as a trade, whereby they procure an advantageous subsistence : which is a mean insinuation, and may be easily confuted by these considerations. Is it not fit, they, who quit all other methods of procuring subsistence, should live of that gospel they preach ? Though men may be swayed by interest, yet the truth and falshood of things no ways depend upon it ; and the measures of judging concerning them are quite of another sort. Nothing, but sufficient evidence, should convince an impartial man, of the truth of what is asserted : and it is most reasonable to suppose, that they, who make it their business to search into these matters, should be best acquainted with the grounds of conviction, and manner of settling such points. Besides, we find, that our value for the laws of the land, and the art of physick, is no ways abated by the great advantages those make, who follow the profession of either of them.

From the duties we owe the ministers of God's holy word and sacraments, we learn, that the contempt of the clergy generally proceeds from a contempt of religion ; or when it takes its rise from a more innocent cause, is very apt to lead to it. A due regard to religion can never be maintained, without a proportionable respect to the ministers of that religion : and, though it may pass for a current maxim among some, that priests of all religions are the same ; yet it will appear by experience a much truer observation, that those (of whatsoever religion) who condemn the priesthood, will be found the same, both as to their principles and practices ; sceptical in the one, and dissolute in the other. So that, to do all good offices to those, who are dedicated to the service of the altar, will encrease our reward in the next world : for he, that encourages and enables a prophet to do his duty, hath his interest in his work, and consequently in the reward thereof : such, as receive a prophet out of respect to his function, shall receive a prophet's reward. Our zeal, therefore, to defend the rights of the sacred order, ought the more frequently to exert itself ; by how much more the faithful discharge of their function exposes

poses them to the ill-will and malice of wicked and unreasonable persons. Besides, there is no better way, to maintain the peace of the church and edify the body of Christ; than, by preserving a great respect for our spiritual governors, and by submitting to their lawful commands. If, what I have here said, make any impression upon men's minds; as most certainly it will, if calmly and seriously considered, it will startle the boldest sinner, to find, that, in contemning this order of men, he affronts his Maker; and in despising the ministers of the Gospel, he despiseth him that sent them. Luke x. 16.

*And danger
of the con-
trary.*

Before I conclude this subject, we must observe, that God, knowing the hearts of men long before, did in his infinite wisdom invest another order or degree of men with a power to punish the evil-doer, and for the praise of them that do well: which is stiled the sovereign magistracy; whose Supremacy consists, in ruling all estates and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal; in exercising their civil power in ecclesiastical causes, as well as over ecclesiastical persons; and in restraining, with the civil sword, the stubborn and evil-doers. Wherefore, all persons in their dominions, spiritual as well as temporal, are subject to their authority; because, when men become ministers in the church, they do not cease to be subjects of the state, to which they belong. Every soul must be subject to the higher powers; which subjection includes an apostle, an evangelist, or a prophet, as well as a tradesman, a gentleman, &c. Thus the church declares, that 'the King's majesty hath the chief power in the realm of *England*, and other his dominions; unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain.* Yet, by virtue of this Supremacy, the ministering of God's word or the sacraments, is not given to princes; because they are not invested with, nor have a sovereign

*Of the
king's Su-
premacy in
ecclesiastical
affairs.*

* See the 37th Article of Religion.

sovereign disposal of, the power of orders. Let it therefore be observed, that the power of the magistrate, when most full and absolute, does not extend either for themselves to use, or to communicate to others, those spiritual powers, which Christ left only to his apostles and their successors in the church: it would therefore be the greatest piece of presumption imaginable, to pretend to sign and seal covenants in God's name, without receiving any power and authority from him in order thereto; as well as the highest insult to God's power, for ministers to plead, that their attendance at the altar is an exemption from the cognizance of the civil powers.

Yet he cannot execute the priest's office.

But may punish evil ministers.

SUNDAY VIII. PART II.

V. A third great branch of the *parental authority* relates, to the reciprocal duties of natural Parents and Children. We are commanded, to honour our Father and Mother; that is, to love, to reverence, to obey, to succour, and to support them: and we shew our love to our parents; when we take such courses, as will encrease our natural affection; and decline all things, which may lessen the same. Parents must be respected by their children, who must pay them external honour and civility; for, as love comprizes all kinds of honour, so is it an offence against natural decency, to see children bear themselves high to their parents, to answer them rudely; or to be wanting in respect, in looks or gesture, in words or in deeds. 'Hearken (says Solomon) unto thy father, that be- gat thee; and despise not thy mother, when she is old.' Let such, as neglect the practice of these and the like exhortations, dread the threatenings of the Wise-man; for (as he says) 'the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother; the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.' But, if parents, through fondness or want of judgment, take off the restraint, and remove the bars, which

Duties to natural parents.

Duty of Children to parents.

Respect.

Their outward behaviour.

Sund. 8.] *The Children's Duty to Parents.* 207

which kept their children at a due distance, they too often have reason to repent thereof: and, if there be no miscarriage on it, it is not owing to their discretion; but to the grace of God, working early in the children's hearts. 'Bring up thy son with indulgence, and he shall make thee afraid: play with him, and he shall bring thee to heaviness. Bow down his neck, whilst he is young; lest he be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart.' *Eccles. xxx.* Children must not pry into the infirmities and failings of their parents, but conceal them: and (that children may discharge this part of their duty better) as it is partly in the parents power, so should it be their great care, not to misbehave in sight of their children, nor set them bad examples. Respect is founded upon some supposed excellency, worth, and some superiority: but, when parents admit their children to an equality, and make them privy to their indiscretions, follies, and miscarriages, they invite contempt.

We shew love to our parents, when we take such courses, as will encrease our mutual affection; and decline all things, which may lessen the *Love.* same: which love must be expressed, by our endeavours, to do them all the good in our power; abhorring, whatever may seem to grieve, or in any wise trouble them; and praying for them. It is so natural and reasonable, to love our parents; that few will own the want of it, even when they know they do not love them. This love is founded on the principles, of common gratitude; because parental love is hourly exerting itself, *The reasons* in all the beneficial acts it can invent; supplies all the wants of helpless infancy; *for this* cures us from all the hazards of heedless *love.* childhood and unthinking youth; shapes the body, preserves it straight and upright, and keeps the limbs in order, and fits them for their natural uses; bears with many troubles and hardships: and, though these matters appear so slight, and be seldom thought upon; yet the miseries, which arise, where this love is abated, are not inconsiderable: some of them have an influence on us, as long as we live. Besides, this affection informs the mind, and regulates the manners: trains up the reason, exercises the

the memory, instructs them to argue and understand their little affairs; and educates and fits them for greater matters: this brings them first to God in baptism, and keeps them after in the ways of religion, by instilling into them virtuous principles; by reminding them of their several duties; by encouraging them in good, with favours and rewards; and by reproof and correcting them, and deterring them from vice. These are the ways parents take, to make their children happy; not to mention those endless and innumerable labours and troubles, which consume their whole life, to make them happy with the good things of this world: so that, if benefits can be the foundation of love in children, they must love their parents, who bestow so many upon them. But, supposing the parents endeavours for their happiness should not succeed to their wishes, as very often they will not; yet, if there be no want of love, the obligation is the same on the child: how therefore can we account for the wickedness of those children, who dare curse their parents, either openly or in their hearts? They, who curse them to their face, should dread the sentence of the Lord; who says, 'He, that curseth father or mother, let him die the death:' and, they who wish the death of their parents, through impatience of their government, or covetous desires of their possessions; should dread, to meet with an untimely death from an all seeing God, as a punishment of so heinous a crime.

The next duty children owe to their parents, is *Obedience*. 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right, and well-pleasing unto the Lord!' This is a certain principle: whilst children want understanding to direct their choice and will, they should have no will, but that of their parents; and therefore should obey, until they arrive at a more sound judgment. Parents must be allowed, to discern what is most proper for their children; and, though they be now and then mistaken, yet it is always safest to follow their commands and instructions, whose main end and purpose is to do them good. Nothing can be plainer, than, that parents love their children dearly, and without design; and are older, wiser, and more experienced; and therefore the fittest to command, and to be obeyed

Sund. 8.] *The Children's Duty to Parents.* 209

obeyed by their children : for this reason, God, to shew us how fit it is to obey our parents, calls himself our Father ; and, from that relation, calls for our obedience likewise. Let stubborn, head-strong children consider then the ties they have, to be obedient to their parents ; and they will find both pleasure and security, in being so : the approbation of all, and the blessing of God, go along with it ; whereas, nothing but trouble of mind, sorrow, shame, infamy, and the displeasure of Almighty God, attend disobedience to their good and wholesome commands. But, if the command of a parent be, to do evil ; or require the child to lye, or steal, or do any other act, by which the laws of God are broken ; he must prefer his duty to God : for we must obey God, rather than man. The commands of parents must not cause them to do, what God our heavenly Father forbids ; or to neglect, what he commands : because the authority of God is first and greatest ; nothing is to stand in competition with it. But, even in this case, the command of God must be plain and evident ; not a doubtful or disputed thing. In like manner, we are not to obey our parents, when they command things contrary to the laws of the land ; the public good being to be preferred to private inclinations. But then, even when we disobey, we must do it with great modesty and tenderness : not with upbraidings and reproaches, not with high and scornful refusals ; but by declining and avoiding such commands, with all the gentle arts and methods of submission possible : for, even in a righteous cause, the language of children must be humble to their parents.

If the commands be reasonable.

And not contrary to the laws of God, &c.

As our obedience to parents is to cease, where the authority of God or the government has laid a prohibition ; so it is supposed not to be required, where the thing under command carries an invincible antipathy to our inclinations. The common instance of this kind is in the case of Marriage ; which, being a state and condition, upon which the happiness or misery of life depends, cannot be engaged in, with any hopes of felicity, without a real affection on the one side, and a good assurance of it on the other : there-

In case of marriage.

therefore, should a parent, overlooking all this, enjoin a child, upon mere motives of advantage, to marry; where there is no foundation of love, nor prospect of content; it is hardly to be thought, such commands are to be complied with. Parents, indeed, are supposed, to have a great hand in this affair: the examples in scripture, as well as the laws of most nations, favour their direction in this case: they are therefore, to take all due care, to see their children well disposed of, according to their age, quality, and tempers. But they must not let the prospect of fortune and estate overweigh all other considerations, of form and favour, birth and education, virtue and good qualities: when they have done this, the children are to obey, as far as they possibly can; and give up the little objections of fancy, to the more mature deliberations of their parents. Under the Mosaic law the maid, who had made a vow, was not suffered to perform it, without the consent of the parent; and it is expressly said, children shall honour and obey their parents: it is in vain therefore, they attempt, to reconcile marrying against consent with honouring their parents, or marrying against command with obeying them, when there is a just reason for the parents refusal: but, when (on the contrary) parents offer to their children, what they cannot possibly like, and what all wise and considerate people cannot but disapprove; there is no doubt to be made, but that, in such a case, children may refuse; and, if their refusal be made with decency and humility, that it will not fall under the head of sinful disobedience. Should the son marry against the consent of the parent, or the father obtrude a match on the son, the plain resolution is in each case; the father and son have severally a negative; for though parents have a great authority, they may yet abuse it: they are not incapable of doing injury to their children; who are to be subject to their parents, but not slaves to their passions.

VI. He, who suffers wrong, may also be righted: the laws of God forbid not this; and the laws of the land are free and impartial: they make no difference of persons, know no relation; in this respect, justice is to be blind. A son or daughter may therefore, without offence of God's laws, appeal

May go to law.

to the laws of the land, against their parents in some cases; namely, in matters of contract, estate, inheritance, or money, when the child cannot live without it: but, for a light injury, or a thing easy to be borne, a child should not implead his parent: the hardship must be nearly intolerable, the injustice great and pressing, when a man's conscience can permit him, to go to law with his parent. It should therefore be plain, the parent is much in the wrong, violating the laws of nature, and putting off the parental love and tenderness, before a child should seek for justice. Nevertheless, this duty is somewhat altered in the case of mothers; when they hasten to second marriages, prejudicial to the children of the former husband. The reason, of going to law with them, will appear more urgent, than with fathers; or with mothers, who continue in the state of widowhood: because they have transferred their affection and interest to another family; and most of the comforts, arising from such contested money, go to strangers, to whom the children have no obligation of parental duty. When a new affection intervenes, then the prospect is disturbed: the new wife is supposed, to make herself acceptable to her new choice, by carrying with her all the advantages of fortune she can get; and in such cases often forgets her children and former love: in this case, when the reason is manifest, and the occasion just; the suit may be commenced, but must be managed with all imaginable care and tenderness.

*In what
manner*

Another instance of duty, which children owe their parents, is to minister to all their wants, under the infirmities of body, the decay of understanding, and the poverty of their condition. Support is a kind of honour, mentioned in scripture; and St. Paul distinguishes this duty of succouring parents under the necessities, by the name of piety. 'Let children or nephews first learn, to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God.' The refusal also, of providing for those of a man's own house, is loaded with heavy guilt: 'He hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' The wicked Jews indeed made the

*Must help
them.*

the word of God of none effect, by their vows and traditions, cancelling this duty : but, on the contrary, God will cause dutiful behaviour to parents to recommend us to the good opinion of others ; there being nothing makes men more acceptable to others, than such obedient behaviour : it is an ornament of a rich and noble child ; and the best recommendation of the poor, to favour, pity, and relief ; to be known, that they are helpful to their distressed parents. The author of Ecclesiasticus, exhorting children to be helpful to parents, tells them, they shall find their account in so doing : ' My son, (says he) help thy father in his age, and grieve him not, as long as he liveth ; and, if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not, when thou art in thy full strength : for the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten ; and, instead of sins, it shall be added to build thee up : in the day of affliction, it shall be remembered.' This ought to be daily held in remembrance by those children, who deny relief to their distressed parents ; and will not part with their own excesses and superfluities, which are indeed their sins, to relieve the necessities of those, to whom they owe their very being ; or, which is worse, in the midst of their pride, scorn to own their parents in their poverty : this is such pride and unnaturalness, as God will never let go unpunished ; for, no unkindness or fault of a parent can discharge the child of this duty, which God has commanded.

VII. Hence it cannot be very difficult to collect, that there is a duty also incumbent upon the Parent to the child ; a duty, taught by nature, and enforced by the strongest terms in the gospel : begins the moment we are born ; and can never be dispensed with, so long as the child liveth, and is not wanting in his duty to his parents. Would she but view the natural care, the very brutes take of their young ; the slothful, over-nice, unnatural mother (who neglects or disdains, when able, to nurse her own child) must read her own conviction ; and confess, the God of nature ordained that creature, who is blessed with a living offspring, to give the same its first nourishment.

Thus

Sund. 8.] *Parents Duty to their Children.* 213

Thus much nature demands, on the very first appearance of the child.

Considering, that the new-born babe is full of the stain and pollution of sin, which it inherits from our first parents through our loins; how diligent should the parent be, in bringing the child to that Baptism, ordained by Christ to wash away our original corruption; to make us members of the church of Christ; and to give us a right, to the adoption of the children of God, and to the reversion of the kingdom of heaven? Whoso neglects this part of our duty (though we hope, God is more merciful, than to lay it to the child's charge) is surely guilty of a great misdemeanour, and contempt of Christ's holy institution.

*Bring them
to Bap-
tism.*

As soon as the child can begin to learn, the parent must also begin to train him up, in the way he should walk through every stage of his succeeding life. Children have souls, as well as men: they soon discover their capacity of reasoning; and make it appear, they can learn the things of God and religion. The great God therefore expects, that little children should be taught, to know, and love, and worship him; for he hath not bestowed their early powers in vain: and, as the child has promised, to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve him; so it is the parents duty, to teach him, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what he has promised in that sacrament by his sureties; to furnish him with an early knowledge of the christian belief, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and all other things, which a christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; to carry him to hear sermons; and to take care, that he be christianly and virtuously brought up, to lead a godly and christian life. All those, whom God shall esteem capable of duty and sinning, must be answerable for their own personal conduct; and, how early he will begin to require this account, he only knows. The very light of nature teaches us, that parents are entrusted with the care of their children in their younger years; to furnish their minds with the seeds of virtue and happiness, as well as to provide for their bodies food and raiment.

*Educate
them.*

ment. Must the parent give him the best instructions he can, in the affairs of this perishing life; and refuse and neglect it, in things of everlasting moment and divine importance? Is it not infinitely better, that children know and serve God, because their parents teach them to do it, than that they be utterly ignorant of God, and live in a stupid neglect of him and his service? Can a religious parent satisfy himself with the philosophical pretence of not biasing the judgment of his children; and let them go on, and die (before they arrive at manhood) in a state of shameful ignorance and rebellion against their Maker? Are children entrusted to the affection and care of parents by the God of nature, for so deplorable an end as this? And will not the life and soul of the child be required at the parent's hand?

Had parents but that just share of tenderness and affection for their sons and daughters, which *Teach them* nature requires, and the scripture enjoins; *their duty.* did they but look on them, as little parts of themselves; they could not forbear, to acquaint them with the things, which belong to their everlasting welfare. Many other arguments may be taken from experience and observation, to convince parents, that it is their duty, to bring their children up in the christian religion; to teach them, what they are to believe and practise; to instruct them in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ; to shew them, in what condition they are by nature, and to what they are advanced by grace; to how much misery, their being descended from so corrupt an original, had reduced them; how their actual sins endangered them, by exposing them to God's wrath; and what deliverance from them was wrought, by Christ our Lord: where this is wanting, neither wisdom, riches, nor honours, can make them happy; and without this they will, with all the rest, be miserable. Therefore, if parents would have their children honour them, and behave obediently; they must bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; they must furnish them with arguments against error and vice, and teach them the christian law; wherein they will see their duty, and find such lessons of instructions, such encouragements and pro-

Sund. 8.] *Parents Duty to their Children.* 215

promises of rewards, as will secure their honour and respect, their service and obedience.

The only way, to educate children rightly, is, to teach them early to deny themselves the gratification of those irregular appetites, which nature has implanted. Self-will, stubbornness, and an inclination to things forbidden, merely because they are forbidden, discover themselves even in our infancy: vice is the natural product of the soil; the more uncultivated the mind is, the more it is over-run with it: but virtue is the slow laborious result, of repeated self-denials, hardships, and difficulties. If parents take no care, to inform their children of their duty they owe to God; they will quickly find their children will pay very little duty to their parents: they will read their own crime of shameful negligence towards God, in the rebellion of their offspring against themselves. But, if care be taken to catechize them, they will (in all probability) prove the good ground, spoken of them by our Saviour: and, when they come to years, to chuse for themselves; there is little doubt to be made, of their voluntarily and heartily espousing the religion of Jesus Christ, and finding all the reason in the world to do so. Therefore, if it please God, to bless you with children; begin very early, to instill into their tender minds the principles of virtue and religion: teach them, to remember their Creator, in the days of their youth; and bring them up, in the fear and admonition of the Lord; set before them the example, of a holy and religious life; and endeavour to wean them from the pride and vanity of the world, and from those hurtful lusts and passions, which tend only to make them miserable both here and hereafter; instruct them in that knowledge, which is useful and profitable; which will give them a right understanding of themselves, and of their duty; and will make them wise unto salvation. If no care be taken of them, but the weeds of vice (which are natural enough) be suffered first to possess the soil; that is, if their passions, and lust, and pride, and sensuality, and love of the world, have once taken up their hearts; it is very doubtful, whether they will ever after be fit for the kingdom of God, whether they will

will ever be prepared and disposed for eternal life : it must be an extraordinary providence of God, can make them so.

Parents must take special care, never (as the manner of too many is) to set their child a bad example : for, while a child sees his parents give themselves up to drunkenness, or swearing, or any other notorious breach of God's commands ; it can scarce be thought, the child will not too nearly copy after the parent's example ; and think himself ill-used, if the parent curb or correct him for his misdemeanours.

Must give them good example.

The limits of parental authority.

It is no less the parents duty, when they see their children fallen into evil courses, to reclaim them, and prevent their misery ; and, though it anger them, they must not let their duty give place to the child's passion ; but only regard, what in all likelihood will follow ; and not, how it will be relished by their children. It is true, parents are forbidden, to provoke their children to wrath : yet, to use restraint, reproof, and correction in reason, though it provoke them to anger and impatience, is not to be forborne by parents. The laws of God and man have left the children to the parents, and will not punish them for doing that to them, which would be punishable if done to strangers ; yet parents may not do any thing, truly injurious to children : nature gives them power, to do them all the good they can ; and only allows them the liberty, of afflicting them for a time, in order to their amendment. When a parent's conscience tells him, the affliction he is laying upon his child is not likely to do him good ; it tells him, he has no authority to do it : but, that he is without natural affection.

Parents should not be severe.

It should be the parent's care therefore, that he mistake not the silence of God's word, and the liberty human laws leave to parents, in the management of their children ; that he mistake not these, for the power and authority nature gives him : for, though God's word prescribe not, how far he may proceed ; though human laws will allow what he does, and though his own temper incline him to inhuman courses ; a parent may yet be unnatural ; and will be punished by our common parent for cruel

cruel usage, which breaks their spirits, so that they have no heart to set about any thing. When children perceive, that all they say and do is ill taken, they have no courage to go on: when they do all they can, to win the affections of parents, and find them still morose and untractable; it is natural to think, they should be disconsolate, and for the time to come give up their fruitless endeavours. Such is the consequence of a severe and rugged treatment. But it seldom stops here: it produces a slavish and disingenuous fear of their parents; and such a fear puts children upon mean shifts, to make their peace, or to avoid their sight: they are never easy, but at a distance; they cannot please with truth, and therefore try to succeed by falsehood. As love and kindness beget love; so nothing is more likely to beget hatred, than constant ill-usage; because it looks like the real fruit of hatred and ill-will. We can easily discern a difference, betwixt a sudden transient anger, and a settled disposition to severity: when anger becomes habitual, and parents are not provoked, but always upbraid and punish; then it is natural for the children, to despair of pleasing them, and to conclude, they are the objects of their hatred and aversion: this will naturally beget a coldness, mean thoughts, evil suspicions, disregard to their commands, and such an aversion, as will quickly end in downright hatred and contempt.

Moreover, it is a point of the greatest folly, for either father or mother (as it too often is the case) to support the children in contempt and disrespect to the other: this must never be attempted: it is indiscreet and unjust; for neither parent has authority to absolve the children of their duty to the other parent. It may be, one of them is of evil-fame or bad example; yet, that does not excuse the child's duty or respect: they must be honoured, when they can neither be loved, obeyed, or imitated, by their children; because to honour their parents, is always in children's power. Though the case be hard, that children shall not be able to pay obedience to the several or opposite commands of their parents; yet it can never happen so, that they shall not always be able, to pay respect to

*Children
not to side
with one
parent
against
another.*

them both: in this they must never fail; for neither parent can be injured by courteous behaviour. So that, if one parent be so unreasonable as to require the child to affront the other; the child would be safe, in a respectful refusal; because no parent has a right, to destroy the other's authority; and each of them have equal right, to the respect of their children; it must indeed be paid to both by all children; and it is a most wicked thing, for any parent to command or encourage any rude undutiful behaviour of the children to either of the parents, upon any provocation or account whatsoever.

If any parent, who calls himself a Christian, neglect
To provide for their subsistence. to make a provision for his own children, according to his understanding and abilities; he is really a bad man; he denies the faith; he withdraws himself from the obedience he

owes to Christ's commands, which enjoin all parents to provide for his children; especially when there is a necessity of sending them abroad from under their own wing, to make such provision for them, and to dispose of them, into such circumstances of living, as that they may both know, how to spend their time innocently and usefully, and withal be obnoxious to as few dangers and temptations, as their condition will admit. He is so much worse than an infidel, by how much he is

In what manner. more obliged than unbelievers, to make such provision for his children. But to determine the proportion of provision parents are to make for children, it will be necessary, to have respect to their age, capacity, and condition. Their age must be considered; because there is a time, when children are so helpless, that all they want must be provided for them; and it can lie on no body so well, as parents. Provision includes every thing children stand in need of; and, as they grow in years, their condition, capacity, and abilities of body and mind, are to come into consideration; which call upon the parent, to inure them to labour and diligence.

Parents are not only obliged, to provide for their children, money, lands, and houses, as if they
In some bonest calling. had then done; but they must improve their abilities of body and mind, to preserve and use

use the benefits, they intend to bestow upon them; they must accustom them, whilst young, to apply and attend to business; without which, the rich will quickly become poor, and the poor will never become rich. The poor can never discharge the duty of parents well to their children, without inuring them to labour and hardship; that is the only provision, they are capable of making for them; and that is their obligation. At first it looks like doing them no harm, to let them continue lazy and idle; and many poor people are extremely faulty, in their manner of education; imagining it a piece of kindness to their children, to bring them up in such an idle life, that (when they should be able, to provide for themselves by honest industry) they must rather beg their bread, than labour for it; a mistake, not only mischievous to the commonwealth, but of pernicious consequence to their children: though it please them for the present; yet it entails perpetual misery, and often untimely death; engaging them in wicked courses, the ready road to ruin: whereas the bringing them up to labour keeps them, at least in a mean sufficiency, if not in plenty; and puts them into a capacity, of rubbing through many difficulties, and bettering their condition of life, as Providence shall direct.

As to the richer and better sort of people; let such be mindful, never to educate their children above the provision they are able to make for them; and (whatever provision they propose to make for them) to inure them to as much diligence and industry, attention and application, as they are able to bear. Every one may be serviceable to God and his country; some one way, some another. Here therefore lies the great duty of those, who have the care of youth; to place them in such circumstances, as best agree with their natural temper and talents. It is a ridiculous thing, to train him up to learning, who hath an aversion for a book; or to put him to a trade, or an active life, who is made for study and retirement. The genius, disposition, and capacity of every child, is principally to be attended to; and the education, to be suited thereto: then, a calling should be chosen, suitable to both; and no worldly con-

*Agreeable
to their
state and
condition
of life.*

considerations ought to divert us, from this proceeding. Experience will quickly show, the kindness of parents are forward to express, in heaping together vast estates for their children, will not be truly beneficial to them; unless they take care of their education, accustoming them to diligence and industry, to close application, and attention to what they are to be employed in: for that is the best provision for children; which will stand them in best stead in all conditions; which will help them, to rise from meanness to sufficiency, and to improve a good estate to a better, and to prevent a fall, or to bear it well, and recover what has been lost. To be well employed, and full of honest business, is a great security; inasmuch, as it is better to be deaf to his call, than to parley with the devil, when he is trying to draw us from our duty. He, who does nothing, will quickly learn to do evil. Idleness is the mother of all mischief. Parents therefore (how rich soever) are guilty of a notorious fault, who deal too tenderly with their children; though they leave them as well provided, as they can; and it is great cruelty in parents, who are able to leave them little or nothing, to leave their children pride and laziness, and an incapacity both of body and mind to do themselves any service; whose effects are so remarkably bad, that it is a wonder, men should need any caution to prevent it: the male children fall thereby, into the meanest of servitude, the refuge of the idle or uninstructed part of mankind; or betake themselves in despair, to the wars abroad, or to robberies at home: the women fall into the hands of wicked tempters, through want of ability to employ themselves in honest courses, and an incapacity of maintaining their condition; their poverty making them unfit for their equals, and their soft education making their inferiors afraid to take them in marriage.

That children should succeed their parents, and inherit their estate and goods, is agreed on by all hands; because no one hath a better right to them; whether we consider the labour of the parents in acquiring them, or their affection to the children of their own body: for, since they love no body like their children,

*Children
should suc-
ceed to their
parents
fortunes.*

dren, and have a right to the fruits of their own industry; this love best intitles their children to their estates, when they have done with them. The civil law therefore gives children the estates of their parents, though they die without a will; presuming, that they, who make no declaration to the contrary, do always intend to go along with natural affection, which bestows the estates of parents on the children of their own body: the proportion, however, in dividing estates to children, is unsettled. When a child is born, the parent sees one to succeed his labours, and seeks no farther for an heir to inherit his estate: then it is natural, this child should enjoy all the parent leaves, and build up his family; because there is no one else, to do it: but, after the parent has more children, then the necessity of the eldest succeeding grows less; because there are more children, to answer the same end, and to build up the name and family, as well as the eldest; and the necessity is changed into other motives. It is decency prefers the elder to the younger; because he was before him, and has done nothing to deserve being cast behind: so far it is reasonable, that he should succeed to advantages. These considerations induce parents, to make provision for their eldest children, by leaving them the better part of their wealth; and they feel concern, when they offend against this rule, without such cause, as wise and civil nations assign by their customs and laws.

*In what
proportion.*

VIII. Some of the causes which justify parents disinheriting their children, are these: first, the striking of parents; there being so much impiety in such violence, that no man can hear of such an action, without assenting to its punishment in the utmost degree: the contriving their death by poison, or other secret means; or the having laid snares to draw them into evil, or having been privy to any design of doing them any mischief, make a child also unworthy of receiving any benefit from his parents. When children neglect their duty to a parent, fallen into frenzy, or any disability; or when (if he be taken captive by enemies abroad, or imprisoned at home) the child neglects to make provision

*When a
child may
be disin-
herited.*

for him, or to get him set at liberty, if it be in his power: these cases afford the parent, when he recovers his understanding or his freedom, just occasion of disinheriting such a child; for, he was unnatural, and deserves no favour from him, to whom he shewed no love and affection; and it is but fit, that (in his turn) he be neglected, who suffered his parent to be so served, when he could have hindered his misfortune. It is not hereby understood, that children are obliged to discharge a parent's debt, for which he has justly lost his liberty: sometimes the children are but just able to live, and have families to maintain; and, if they should discharge their parents debts, they must themselves contract new ones; and some parents are so extravagant, that there would be no end of paying. But, when children's faults are scandalous, and reflect disgrace on the parents and family; when they are extremely wicked, and give no hopes of reformation, but appear irreclaimable; they may then be disinherited. Vice and virtue are to be considered by laws, as right and wrong, in the preserving families and tribes: it tends to the advantage of a state, that virtuous children be encouraged, by inheriting their father's estate; and the like discouragement be given, to notorious vice. Yet, there is a difference to be made, betwixt an unnatural closeness, which will part with nothing to children before death; and a profuse folly, which will lay the parent at the mercy of the child: in such a case, the parent loses one of the most effectual means, of keeping them virtuous and dutiful; for, when there is no more expectation from parents, there will be no more dependence on them. It is therefore highly justifiable in parents, to disinherit children; whose immoralities cry aloud to heaven, reflect dishonour on the family, and exclude all hope of reformation: and, by parity of reason, if a daughter transgress the laws of honour and virtue, she is left to the pity of her parents, and can lay claim to no provision by either divine or human laws. In all these cases we excuse the parents casting them off; at least the children deserve it: their conscience reproaches them not of cruelty, or want of natural affection to their children; whose offences dispense with the parent's duty; and without these faults a parent will

will never be easy, nor innocent in casting off the children of his own body.

On the contrary, parents are criminal, who exercise this authority over their children without reason, and disinherit them for slight transgressions: if their dislike be founded on no better ground, than an ill shape; as if the parents fancy were to pass for judgment, and the children must be punished for what they cannot help: or on a defect of parts and abilities; not such, as would suffice for the plain and honest purposes of life, but such as are to render them accomplished; which are often too near to vanity and confidence, and might be better spared: or on some personal dislike, which is really blameable; for parents never must pretend hatred or aversion to their children; the subject will not bear it, and whenever parents feel it, they ought to suspect themselves of something much amiss; or on small faults, which might be pardoned in a tolerable good servant, and should be overlooked in children. Children again are too often dispossessed of the father's love, and of hopes of succession, by false suggestions; they are even mistaken by the parents, or accused by others; the second wife sometimes tries, to make way to the inheritance for her own children, by soft insinuations to the prejudice of the children of the first marriage, or by downright accusation of them; or this ill province falls to the share of other relations, whose prospect of succeeding is not very far off. But this is most malicious and wicked; and the least a parent can do, will be, to consider whose friends they are, who provoke him against the children of his own body. Again; parents, who consume their estate in gaming, drinking, riot, luxury, and sinful pleasures, do not better discharge their duty to their children; than they, who for little or no cause (anger, folly, or humour) disinherit them; though it must be granted, there is great difference, between the minds and affections of these two sorts of parents; yet the effect to the children is the same, who are rendered as destitute and helpless by the neglect of the one, as by the displeasure of the other.

Lastly, that all other endeavours may prove effectual, to the child's present and future happiness; *To give them good examples, and bless them.* let the parent not only constantly recommend them to God's care, protection, and blessing; with daily and earnest prayer; but strive, by a just and virtuous discharge of his duty, to engage God's promise, to shew mercy to the thousandth generation of his posterity, who love him and keep his commandments; that his seed may be blessed for ever, and not (with good Josiah) suffer the vengeance of God's wrath, and to be cast out of his sight, for the impiety of his forefathers. It should therefore be a parent's earnest care, so to live in God's favour, as to entail a blessing on himself and his children for ever.

SUNDAY IX.

- I. *Of the duty of natural and spiritual Brethren.* II. *Of the duty of a Wife; Obedience, Meekness, Fidelity, and Love: of Dress, and securing the affections of the Husband:* III. *Of her behaviour to an adulterous Husband.* IV. *Of the duty of an Husband; Love, Faithfulness, Maintenance, Instruction, and Prayer.* V. *Of the chief consideration in marriage; and of unlawful marriages.* VI. *Of the duty of Friends; Faithfulness, Admonition, and Constancy.* VII. *Of the Qualifications requisite in Friendship; and of the choice of Companions.* VIII. *Of the duty of Servants; Obedience, Faithfulness, Silence, and Diligence.* IX. *Of the duty of Masters; Justice, Admonition, and Encouragement in well doing.*

Of the duties of Brethren. I. **T**HE next sort of relation in a family is that between BRETHREN. Brethren (in the strict meaning of the word) are those only, who are descended from the same parents, and are united in the interest of the same family; whose birth, education, and future subsistence, cannot, according to the course of nature, be expected from any other fountain, than their own house. As therefore these ties are mutual, and the parent of them all should have

have the same unreserved and undistinguished love and regard for them all ; so it is the duty of such brethren, to complete their common parent's love, by uniting their own hearts and affections ; that the good education and careful endeavours, by which their parent strives to promote their present and future welfare, may not be in vain. How can brethren, who curse each other, hope to partake of their parent's blessing ? How can they, who in a special manner partake of each other's substance, expect to live peaceably and quietly with strangers, who are not of their own house, and with whom (in the course of the world) they must have to deal ; if they be already so unnatural, so unfortunate in their own disposition, as not willing, much less endeavouring, to shew bowels of compassion, tenderness, and affection to those, who are united to them in the next degree to their parents ?

This love is not to vanish away, in a strained complaisance, or courtly civility ; it is not to be kept up, in an outward show, with a view perchance to please the common parent, or to stifle some jealousies, or to cover some inexcusable design, in taking advantage of a sincere and undesigning brother or sister : such love is worse than hatred ; such a brother (like Joseph's brethren) only waits the first opportunity to destroy those he pretends to love. It must be confessed from common experience, there are few families so well united in affection, as to seclude all jars, wranglings, and debates among brethren ; which too often proceed from a secret envy, when one child is preferred unadvisedly in a parent's affections ; and this is, for the most part, the cause of all differences amongst brethren : but this should be so far from prompting us, to break with our brother or sister ; that we should be rather convinced thereby of the necessity there is for us, to love them ; to prevent the fatal consequences, which too frequently follow such differences, to the ruin of the whole family ; and so to convince our brethren, that we neither quarrel with them, nor envy them any advantage, any more than one part of the body does envy another part of the same body : this

*Natural.**The necessity of Love among brethren.*

will provoke them, to forward the good of us all, as being members of the same body.

As there is a duty and interest of love, among natural brethren ; so is there also, among the members of Christ's church. All Christians are brethren, by adoption in Christ Jesus ; who has established love, as the great mark of his disciples : thereby informing us, that as God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son to redeem us, to make us members of his body, the church, and children of God ; so the spiritual bond of religion should never fail, to unite us all in love and charity, peace and concord. It is not enough, to say, we are brethren in Christ ; because we are all called, in one baptism, to partake of the promises through Christ : we must approve ourselves brethren indeed, by holding fast the profession of that faith, once delivered unto the saints, without wavering ; never (through vain curiosity, or unbounded passion, or for any other unlawful means whatever) breaking communion with those, who believe and profess all necessary truths. As a means therefore, of promoting this christian duty ; it is necessary also, that we shew forth our good conversation in Christ, and our love to his members, by communicating with them in all his holy institutions ; not only continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, but also in breaking of bread and in prayer.

Such a christian temper as this, will induce those, who are well grounded in the true faith, to bear with, and not to despise, the infirmities of such as are weak ; who have been led from the truth, by a too rash or mistaken judgment, or by an erroneous education. In such cases as these, let no man judge his brother ; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way : receive the weak in faith, but not to doubtful disputations ; teaching him that which makes for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another : let not his weakness or error ever abate our christian charity towards him ; not even, though he be fallen into sin. The great end of Christ's preaching was, to call sinners

to

to repentance; and how can we be brethren in Christ Jesus, if we do contrary to his doctrine and example? Therefore, if we see our brother commit sin, we are not to imitate the proud Pharisee, boasting of our own righteousness; nor reflect on, or almost make a merit of, our brother's faults: but should follow Christ and his apostles directions, to restore him that is overtaken in a fault, and consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted: we should admonish him; and meekly endeavour, to recover him, from the error of his way; remembering, that we must not be presumptuous of our own strength, but take care while we stand that we do not fall; lest, while we seek the conversion of others, we ourselves become castaways.

*To restore
them, when
fallen.*

Lastly, we should so enlarge our affections, as to sympathize with all the faithful, whenever they (as a church, or singly) are brought into tribulation for Christ's sake. This is strongly urged by the Apostle, under the similitude of a natural body; whereof, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: so that, whoever is so insensible to the afflictions of the church, whereof he is a member, as to neglect to pray, with holy David, 'O be favourable and gracious unto Sion!' whoever does not pity her in the dust; cannot be accounted a living member thereof: whoever shuts up his bowels of compassion, from any afflicted brother in Christ; does at the same time, disown himself to be a disciple of Christ, who has given this, as a peculiar mark of his true disciples: 'By this' (says he) 'shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love, one to another.'

*To sympathize with
them.*

II. The *sixth* relation is that between HUSBAND and WIFE.

A number of people cannot long subsist together, without observing their respective duties: none will obey, where all would command; and mischief then must be at the end of all their actions. The longer people live together, the greater is the necessity therefore, of subjection to each other: for there can be no unity, where two parties contend for superiority; or for such an equality.

*The necessity
of mutual
Subjection.*

lity, as will not yield in particular and indifferent cases.

What avails all the pomp and parade of life, which appears abroad; if, when he shifts the gaudy flattering scene, a man be unhappy (where happiness must begin) at home? Whatever ingredients of bliss providence may have poured into his cup, domestic misfortunes will render the whole composition distasteful: for grandeur and happiness are two very distinct ideas; however, some (who have a false idea of life, and a wrong way of thinking) may confound them. 'Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is; than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith.' That is; it is better to have peace without plenty, than plenty without peace. Quietness under a man's own roof, and quietness in his own conscience, are two substantial blessings; which whoever barter for show and pomp, will find himself a loser by the exchange. Abroad, we must more or less find tribulation: yet, still we may be tolerably happy; as long as our home is a secure and peaceful retreat, from all the disappointments and cares we meet with in that great scene of vexation, the world: but if that, which should be our main sanctuary from uneasiness, become our principal disquietude, how great must our uneasiness be! There cannot be a greater curse, than to have those of our own bosom our greatest foes; when we neither can live happily with them, nor must think of living from them. Love is a tender plant: it must be kept alive with great delicacy; it must be fenced from all inclement blasts, or it will soon droop its head and die. We ought indeed, in general, to be very tender (we can scarce be too much so) of what may affect another; otherwise we do, we know not what: no man can tell, unless he feel for him, how much another may suffer, from any unkind thing he may say or do: an angry word may give a deeper wound to some minds, than an injurious action to others; who are of stuff too hard, to let any impression at all be made upon them.

This should convince *Wives*, of the necessity there is for government in a family; established, on their own subjection, and their husbands superiority. Superiority

is necessary, to the support of rule and order; and is better placed in husbands than in wives. *The Wife's*
The Apostle expressly commands the wife, *subjection to*
to shew obedience: 'Wives, (says he) sub- *the husband.*
'mit yourselves unto your own husbands, as
'it is fit in the Lord.' God seems to have declared their
sovereignty, by blessing them with greater strength and
abilities: He has made their body and mind fitter to un-
dergo the toils and labours, necessary to the well-being
of the world; for carrying on business at home, and
trade abroad; for the administration of justice, and the
defence of the publick: where God has qualified his
creatures for these offices, (which are so necessary, that
the world cannot subsist in peace and order without them)
we may safely conclude, he there designed also to place
the superiority of government. As God then hath made
man fit for these offices, he hath thereby made him supe-
rior to such, as are not equal to them; and, conse-
quently, superior to the woman: but, not with a ty-
rannical authority; not to use them, like slaves and me-
nial servants, but as friends and companions in all the
state of wedlock. It is granted, there are some in-
stances of women, excelling in these particulars; but
they will not overthrow the visible design of God: though
there be women, superior to many men, in strength of
body and abilities of mind, in fineness of parts, great-
ness of capacity, soundness of judgment, and strength
of memory; yet the number of such, neither is, nor
was, nor will be, great enough, to shew that God inten-
ded to give that sex the superiority. The Apostle limits
the authority of the Man over the Woman; he describes
the manner of her subjection, and shews the cause there-
of. 'Men (says he) love your wives, and be not bitter
'against them.' To the *Women* he prescribes these
rules: 'Let the Woman learn in silence, with all sub-
'jection: but I suffer not a woman to teach, (i. e. in
'public) nor to usurp authority over the man; but,
'to be in silence; for Adam was first formed, then Eve.'
Again, the Woman's subjection is inferred, from Eve's
being first in the transgression. She was deceived first,
and then deceived her husband: she was undone, by
disobeying God; and he, by following her. She must
there-

therefore rule no more: it was part of her curse, that her desire should be to her husband, and he should rule over her.

This power of the Husband, and obedience of the
The hus- Wife must have their proper bounds: else
band's com- the one may exercise a power, which be-
mands should longs not to him; and the other may refuse
be lawful. submission, where it is due. It is certain,
 a Wife owes no subjection to her Husband,

against the laws of either God or man: no command or example of her husband will excuse a wife, offending against a known law of God, or doing any thing immoral; she owes him no subjection, in such matters: he is himself a rebel to their common Lord and Master, if he command any thing unlawful; and she is with him in transgression, if she obey. In other matters, their dis-

The Wife's
Obedience.

obedience will be faulty; where they cannot make their excuse, by reason and discretion, allowed custom, decency, and good fame. Some may ask, who shall be judges in such a case? I answer, Wives must not oppose their wills to their husbands, or their reasons to his, unless they be plainly oppressed; lest they be found, to contend for mastery: and, if the will and reason of one be equal to the other's, it is something besides that, must determine, who shall yield; and then we must recur, to know, Who must obey. The Apostle therefore exhorts the Women, to adorn themselves with a meek and quiet

Meekness.

spirit: that is, not to put off their natural temper, and be immediately changed, but to govern themselves so, as to be meek and quiet upon all occasions: that by reason and consideration they restrain themselves, from falling into bitterness, impatience and clamour. Many cross accidents will happen, and they must undergo many provocations and severe trials; and, if they do not arm against them, with a patient and prudent spirit, their sufferings will be doubled: they are not to be insensible or stupid, under what befalls them; but to prepare, that they do nothing unbecoming them; and herein they exercise their reason and abilities: matters are seldom mended, but often made worse, by noise and contention: the folly or perverseness of men is not cured,

nor

nor any unlucky accidents remedied, by fury and impatience; but, by indiscreet management, what would otherwise have done little hurt, becomes too often the occasion of great mischief. Who can, with any tolerable satisfaction, compare the provocations of anger with the events and consequences? Mischief and sorrow are in the midst thereof; therefore they can find no comfort therein: the learning, people get by contention, is commonly too dear paid for; they only find, they have weakly lost, what they perchance may never recover again. Yet people, who ought to consider these things best, are so far from enquiring, where and when they must obey, and in what cases they are at liberty; that they will evermore be at liberty, and never in subjection at all, though in the most reasonable cases; forgetting their duty and their sex together.

Wives must certainly know, that without a chaste conversation they are no longer wives; the band of wedlock is dissolved before God; and if the husband ask the assistance of the law, it may be dissolved before man also: for, infidelity herein is a breach, of the most solemn vow can be made. Our Saviour saith, though it be not lawful to put away a wife for every cause, yet in the case of fornication it may be done. A wife's fidelity must also be always attended, with a frugal management of the worldly affairs, committed to her charge; so as never to apply her husband's goods and money, to any other purposes, than he shall approve of, and to the real benefit of his family.

Fidelity.

These considerations should deter women from such dress, as serves to looseness and immodesty: the design itself is no less abominable, than the practice is dangerous: heating the fancy, and enflaming the heart of impetuous youth; and kindling such impure desires, as will consume both body and soul. She therefore, who dresses to make herself amiable or comely, must ask herself, Why she desires that grace and comeliness, and what use she designs to make of people's admiration; for, according to the purity of her design, will her adorning be more or less innocent in the sight of God. Again; such a dress, as takes up too much time,

Modesty in dress.

may

may reasonably be presumed to be criminal; because our time is given us, for better purposes. It should likewise never be forgotten, that such costliness of apparel, as exceeds the quality and ability of the wearer, is an offence against decency; and against that becoming order, which the wisdom and custom of all times and places have agreed upon, as most convenient (by distinguishing the ranks and quality of men) to prevent confusion and disrespect: it unreasonably exhausts the gain and labour of the man's calling, when that, which should maintain the house and children, and support the husband's trade and credit, is trifled away in show and gay appearance; not only to the shame, but too often to the ruin of the whole family: the very heart of industry is broken, when its fruits are so lavishly squandered away. She is certainly a bad wife, who goes beyond her husband's abilities.

Women call their marriage, changing their condition: but they should also remember, they change it for that of their husband, whatever it be, better or worse, to which they must suit their minds: for, this is the only way, to thrive in that state.* They should also remember, that their obedience is founded upon Love. The

Love. end, for which woman was created, was, to be a help to her husband; and no state of life, wherein the providence of God shall place him (health or sickness, wealth or poverty) can in any wise discharge a wife from this duty. Perfect love, not only casteth out fear, but forbids all kind of sullenness, harshness, noise, scoldings, or unquietness; and leads to, and cultivates, a chaste conversation. If that prevail, the married pair have gained their point; if not, they have yet the satisfaction, of having done their duty, and taken the courses most likely to effect, what they desired: they are excusable to God and man, and shall not fail of their reward at the last day.

Sober married women rightly judge, that they are obliged, in common prudence, to secure the affection of their husbands; by putting on such good qualities of the mind, as will render them acceptable to wise and sober men, even when their beauty is decayed: and when

How to secure the husband's affections.

* See Temperance in Apparel, Sunday 16. Sect. iv.

men discern the fear of God and a sense of religion in their wives, and see them manage their affairs with wisdom and discretion, and discharge the duties of every state (mother, wife, or mistress of a family) with diligence and prudence; they cannot resist such qualities, as these; which render them most lovely in the eyes of all, and will give them grace and favour in the sight of God, as well as man.

From the whole then it appears, that the faults of a husband cannot excuse a wife from these duties; as well in regard to the commandment of God, as to her own and her husband's welfare: harshness and ill usage can never be supposed proper means, of reclaiming a bad husband. St. Peter therefore says; 'Like-

*The husband's
Faults acquit not
from these
duties.*

' wife, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won, by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear: whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price: for after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands' Such behaviour as this would much conduce to the quiet of families: for it is notorious, that a contentious woman often drives a peaceable and good husband from his family, into places, where he may contract bad habits, of drunkenness, company-keeping, or something worse; which may bring them both to poverty, and never after be reclaimed.

III. How is a woman obliged to behave herself, and how far is she to exercise a meek and quiet spirit, when she is sure her husband wanders from her bed? This has been the subject of many enquiries. In such a case, where it can be proved clearly, the laws of the land will (if she chuse it) release her from her bands, and leave her at liberty: but this liberty is not to be humoursome. If she

*A wife's
duty to an
adulterous
husband.*

cohabit

cohabit with her husband again, she is presumed to have forgiven his sin ; and his former trespass will not be a just occasion, for her leaving him, when she thinks fit.

Religion and discretion both recommend patience: for, *Patience,* she is undoubtedly obliged, to procure the conversion of her husband from his evil ways, *to reclaim him.* by all the methods she possibly can ; but she is not obliged, to hurt herself on his account : as far as admonitions can bring him to a sense of his injurious usage, and occasion his amendment, she will do well to endeavour it. She may also engage sober people, spiritual guides, or grave relations, to work his conversion, and never suffer sin, when she can with secrecy and tenderness remove it. But, if she be probably assured, that the man is of a churlish humour ; that the very discovery of his wicked folly will harden him in his sin, or provoke him to use her cruelly ; she is not, in that case, obliged to endeavour to reclaim him: for, so long as the prudent wife takes care, that her connivance or dissembled ignorance, her compliance and her silence, or her patience and submission, give no countenance to her wicked partner to prosecute his unlawful love ; she is without blame ; she is not obliged to make herself miserable, by endeavouring to make him good.

A wife may permit, what she cannot prevent ; and, by *Meekness.* such permission, defend herself from wrongs: she may lawfully enjoy all the advantage which living with her husband can afford her ; and avoid the mischiefs which would attend a separation. For this, there is need of a meek and quiet spirit ; nothing can stand a wife in better stead: gentle usage wins most upon hardened minds ; and men are sooner persuaded by silence, when it shews submission without fullness, than by angry arguments. Superiority is claimed by man, as his prerogative ; and a meek quiet spirit will yield it to him, even while it disarms him: submission vanquishes without resistance, whereas one dispute begets another. Meekness, patience, and forbearance have a natural force, to remove all manner of contention : they excite a sense of shame, and gratitude, and honour ; and leave the transgressor, to consider the evil he has done.

IV. The

IV. The Apostle, having said, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord;" adds, "*Husbands*, love your wives; and be not bitter against them." It is as much the husbands duty then, to love their wives; as it is the wives, to submit themselves to their own husbands: and therefore the husband first promises to love his wife, before she promises to obey him.* His Love is the condition of her obedience: if therefore he withdraw his love from her, he can only blame himself, should she afterwards fail in her obedience. The husband's love is absolutely necessary, to the ease and happiness of marriage. Religion, discretion, and good qualities, birth, education, and estate, are all (in their several measures and degrees) useful to make a marriage life lastingly happy: yet, neither honour, nor respect, nor esteem, can make wives so happy. as tender affection, which they had rather have; without which, the rest are mere formality and insipid courtship; a sacrifice, without a heart. Hence it comes to pass, that many men are counted happy (and might indeed be so) in the good qualities and discretion of their partners: and yet are far from being so, wanting this hearty affection: for love supplies many defects, and makes amends for many failings; covers many faults, and lightens all family inconveniences. Considering therefore, how much the happiness of a man depends upon his choice, he cannot answer it to God, or man, or himself; if he marry, where he does not, or cannot, really place his affections. No law obliges a man to marry; but he is obliged, to love the woman, whom he has taken in marriage.

St. Peter bids the husband dwell with his wife, according to knowledge; giving honour unto her, as unto the weaker vessel: he therefore should treat her with all lenity and softness; as a vessel, which is of a finer, but weaker, contexture; and to be handled, with greater caution and tenderness. If a man would give himself time to consider, to what extraordinary difficulties and sufferings, God, by his order and

* See the man and the woman's promise in the office of matrimony.

appointment, has most unavoidably subjected and exposed the woman above the man; as well by her own natural frame and make, as by a great many sad but usual accidents: he would find himself obliged, in common pity, to deal gently with her, to sustain her, under her infirmities; and, by patience and forbearance, endeavour to make her burthen lighter. Would he consider farther, notwithstanding these disadvantages, of what singular use and benefit a good and prudent companion is, in all the vicissitudes of life; what solace in health, what comfort in sickness, what help in distress, what security in trouble, he enjoys by her means: and above all, what labour and hardships, what watchings, what disquietudes, as well as many humble offices, she is content to bear, with all the chearfulness and delight imaginable; bringing up his children, the delight of his eyes, and the strength of his old age: who so considers this, instead of taking pleasure in opposing and insulting the wife of his bosom, will (both in gratitude, and for the mutual pledges of their love) nourish and cherish her, even as his own flesh.

If men will not consider the imperfections of human nature, nor remember their own mistakes; if *Indulgence.* they will take advantages, and make ill-natured reflections on the weaknesses of their partners, and make them topicks of upbraidings and revilings; there will be no love and mutual kindness. All creatures are imperfect, and stand in need of patience and forgiveness; more especially, in a constant conversation: and in the management of family affairs, there will unavoidably arise occasions of disagreement. If there be not (then) a readiness to put the kindest construction on each other's actions; the conjugal affection will soon vanish away. But, when a man considers (as he ought) that it is his interest, as well as duty, to love his partner, he will make it his choice, to be a good husband: for it is the wisest thing he can do, for his present ease and satisfaction.

Another duty, is to prove the sincerity of his love, by *Faithfulness.* a strict faithfulness of the marriage-bed. Christian marriage requires mutual fidelity, and the performance of the promise both had made, to forsake all other persons, and adhere closely to each other,

ther, as long as they both shall live.* This is supposed in all contracts; and verbally expressed, and actually engaged for, in all regular marriages; to this fidelity the man is equally obliged, with the woman; and, in the violation of it, there is both injustice and perjury; as it is the breach of a most solemn promise, and a very great injury. A man (perchance) may be so far gone in his own favour, as to think slightly of his own offences: in this case, let him consider, whether he would not think his mother, or sister, or daughter, injured; should their husbands wander from their beds, in pursuit of unhallowed pleasures: and, as he judges, they would resent the injustice of their husbands; let him be assured his own wife resents his infidelity, and bears it with the same discontent. These reflections are not confined to open and notorious crimes: the most concealed and secret frequenting of the company of lewd women will corrupt the hearts, even of those, who intend to be good husbands; for, virtuous affections decline, as fast as the disorderly gain ground: it ends at best, in formal cold civilities; but more commonly, in hatred and aversion, in quarrel and contest, and in churlish or brutal usage; nay, sometimes in tragical events: it is a vain mistake in a husband, to think (how strong soever her affection be for him) he shall live easy with his partner, while he is cold to her in this particular.

Again; men should maintain their wives, as becomes partners: they are friends and companions to their husbands, not slaves, nor menial servants; and are to be partners in their fortunes: for, as they partake of their troubles and afflictions, it is just they share their fortunes. When a husband falls into decay, or any sort of calamity, he involves his wife with him; she is the inseparable companion of his misery and misfortune: and what can make amends for this, but her partaking also of all his good fortune? Does he not expressly promise this in the matrimonial contract; whereby it is provided, that she have the use of things necessary, convenient, and delightful; to be as happy, as his worldly condition can make her, in a marriage state? He there-

Maintenance.

* See *fidelity*, in the duty of wives, *Sunday 9, Section ii.* and the man and woman's promises in the *office of matrimony*.
fore

fore is unjust as well as unkind, if he deny it; because she bargains for it upon her part, and he engages for it upon his: nor does this obligation cease, upon the death of the husband; for, if the wife survive, he must provide for her (so long as she lives) to the utmost of his ability; according to the quality and condition they have lived in, and the custom of the place they are in. Not only churlish men are to blame then, who (in their life time) deny their wives, what is convenient; but even the best-natured men are bad husbands, if they take no care of their support and maintenance, should they survive; if, by their profuseness or idleness, by gaming or intemperance, they expose them to want and misery: leaving them naked and unprovided for, at the time of age perchance, when least able to help themselves; or (perhaps) incumbered with a charge of children, to be maintained out of the widow's small income, or by her hand-labour. Such men in vain pretend to love and kindness, who are careless in this particular, and make not a provision for the widow-hood of their wives, as well as they are able; but leave them destitute and helpless; as if the sorrows of their solitary state were not a sufficient load of trouble. Not that I blame those men, whose estate, calling, or industry, cannot competently furnish them with maintenance; but such, as carelessly, wastefully, or otherwise, take no care to prevent it, when it is in their power.

It is also the duty of the husband, to teach his wife, *Instruction.* what is for her eternal good and welfare; when he finds her ignorant of the means of salvation. This is implied, in St. Paul's command to the Corinthians; where he bids the wives, learn of their husbands at home: whence we may also learn, that a master of a family should endeavour after christian knowledge, to instruct those, who are under his care.

But, above all, it is the mutual duty of husband and wife, to be instant in prayer to God for each other, and to strive together for their spiritual and temporal welfare; not only by exhortation to the performance of virtue, and avoiding and forsaking of vice; but by constant example in the practice of every good work, both in their family, and to every other object of pity and compassion: otherwise, their love cannot

not

not be accounted perfect; for, that love can never be supposed to be grounded on virtue and religion, which can easily permit any one, to run to their temporal or eternal ruin, when in their power to prevent it.

V. Whoever intend to marry, should (therefore) not so much regard the outward shape or beauty, wealth, &c. as the spiritual qualifications of the persons, to whom they desire to be joined; which will make that state of life truly holy, and serve to the great end of the soul's salvation. A competency for the ease of life is certainly to be regarded: but a virtuous man or woman is of more value, than all the wealth and honours the world can afford.

But, before we conclude, let us consider that solemn charge and declaration, in the form of matrimony, concerning those, who (without regard to the laws* of God and man) rashly enter in- to that state. Whoever have betrothed themselves, by promise, to any other person before, or knowingly take such a person in marriage, commit adultery; because, in justice, they belong to those, to whom they had made their first promise: and whoever marry, within the degrees of kindred forbidden by God, in Levit. xviii. are guilty of incest, so long as they live together. These are not only sins at the time, but are evil in their effects; which might be prevented, were it duly considered, (as our church teacheth) that 'Marriage is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocence; and therefore is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God: duly considering the causes, for which matrimony was ordained; and that as many, as are coupled together otherwise than God's word doth allow, are not joined together by God, neither is their matrimony lawful.†

* See the admonition to those, who intend to marry, at the end of this book.

† See the minister's exhortation before the office of matrimony.

SUNDAY IX. PART II.

VI. The *seventh* relation is between FRIENDS. Of all the relations, wherein we stand towards one another, there is none more strict and binding, none more necessary and beneficial, than that of *Friendship*. The most delicious place, barred from all commerce and society, would be insupportable, and make a man run mad with his own happiness: for human nature is imperfect, and has not fund enough to furnish out a solitary life: besides, there are so many adverse accidents attending us, that, without the communion of friendship, virtue itself is not able to accomplish its ends; because the best man, on several occasions, wants an assistant, to direct his judgment, quicken his industry, and fortify his spirits.

When men have contracted friendship, and espoused their souls and minds to one another; there arises a new relation between them, beyond what common charity creates: for, in this close and near relation, men give each other a property in themselves; to be guides and comforts in their doubts and sorrows, monitors and remembrancers in their errors and forgetfulness, shelters and refuges in oppressions and calamities, and trustees to each other's thoughts and deeds. How much then are they mistaken, who esteem them their friends, who are only their companions in sin; or who prompt, aid, or assist them, to offend God, defraud their neighbour, or pollute themselves? Certainly, if the drunkard, the covetous and flattering companion, deserves the name and place of a friend; then the devil himself may claim it in a much higher degree, in the mistaken notion of friendship. Whereas a true and sincere friend will discover himself chiefly by deterring us from vice, and setting us a pious example of virtue.

True friendship will approve itself further, by a faithful discharge of every trust reposed in it. A true friend can never be unjust in his dealings, nor betray the secrets of him, who puts his confidence in him. He who takes advantage of his friend's credulity, sincerity, or weakness, ought to be despised by all men. These are the treacherous wounds,

for which (Solomon tells us) every friend will depart: but, to convince a man of the sincerity of our friendship, we should watch all opportunities *Assistance.* of serving him, and be always ready to guide him with good advice; to comfort him, under anxiety of mind; to relieve him, as much as in our power, in his temporal wants; and even to run some hazards, if it be possible to rescue him from trouble and danger. True friendship is continued and unwearied: a friendship, neither to be dissolved by length of time, nor broken by slight offences.

The most certain means, of convincing a man of the sincerity of our friendship, is to take all opportunities, of exhorting and encouraging him in *Admonition.* acts of piety; with freedom to shew him all his failings, and reprove him for all sinful and unbecoming behaviour. Self love is so rooted in our nature, and we have that partiality to ourselves, that we do not see our miscarriages, at least not in their true light: it is therefore necessary, some charitable hand make us sensible thereof. Moreover, all professions of friendship, without the use of such freedoms, will be apt to degenerate into flattery: it is in vain we pretend, to be ready and willing to serve our friends; when we neglect to do that solid good to their souls. But great regard must be had to time and circumstances, that this practice of piety and friendship may have its desired effect. The occasion also should be weighty and important: we should take care, that our reproof be free from passion or self-interest; lest it seem to be given, from any other motive, than the desire of doing good; and the softest language, and most favourable circumstances, ought to concur, to make it of force. Nay, our own happiness is eminently concerned, in putting our friend in mind, when he transgresses the laws of God; by representing unto him his faults, with the aggravations and consequences which attend them; that, by a seasonable warning, he may be recovered to a right sense of things, and be preserved from that ruin, which otherwise threatens his soul and body: for, we become partakers of another man's sin; if, before any wicked action be committed, we knowingly be any ways aiding or abetting towards the committing of it; or if, after it is committed, we any ways commend or justify it;

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though

though we be not immediate actors in it. We are also obliged, by the bonds of friendship, not only to admonish our friend of his fault; but to take great care, that we fall not into those crimes, we have first seen and blamed in him: or at least, we ought (at the same time) to condemn ourselves; that, by exposing our own follies, we may with the better grace rectify those of others: and we ought to mix due praises, with our reproofs; that the roughness of the one may be abated, by the emulation raised by the other expedient.

If we see our friend misled. we should most earnestly pray for him, that God may bring him to a right knowledge of his duty; and crown him with comfort in this life, and happiness in the world to come.

Prayers. In fine; nothing, but breach of trust and incorrigible vice, should ever break the unity of friends: neither do any betray a greater weakness and folly, than they, whose fickleness and lightness of humour deprives them of the benefit of an old friend. A friend cannot be too old; we cannot enjoy a sincere friend too long: the very continuance of friendship, the constant experience of another's fidelity, assistance, and loving admonitions, must make it of greater value and esteem. Therefore, says Solomon, 'thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not;' even though perchance he offend thee in some little punctilio, or light offence. Reflect, whether thou never gavest him as much or more reason, to cast thee off: at least, consider thine own infirmities, and how soon thou mayest possibly give him more just reason to turn his back on thee. Not that hereby I would insinuate, that we are so to bear with others under a mistaken notion of friendship, as to countenance any vice, or permit the omission of any virtue.

VII. Great care should be taken, in the choice of friends. It may perchance be asked, What qualifications should bind this agreement? Solomon says, that 'He, that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed:' if therefore we design any progress in virtue, we must frequent those, who are

The Qualifications requisite in a friend.

are eminent examples of it; and avoid such fools, as make a mock at sin.

As in the choice of friends, so in the choice of company we should fix upon such, as have virtues and christian principles, and endeavour to shew the effects of them in their lives and conversations:

*The choice
of Com-
pany.*

for, as men of no principles are unqualified for friendship, because they have no foundation to support it; so men, who act contrary to their good principles, give but an ill proof of the sincerity of their intentions. Men sceptically inclined may endanger the firmness of our faith, as wicked men may the strength of our virtuous inclinations. Having secured this main point, and having fenced against the greatest danger of conversation; we ought to have a peculiar regard, to the temper and disposition of those we pitch upon, for our constant companions: for, if they have a great deal of passion, and a little share of sense, our freedom and friendship will expose us to vexatious troubles: let us be ever so much upon our guard, a great deal of fire will sometimes heat us; we may be provoked, and then we are the worse for such companions. It is commendable, in the next place, to prefer those in our esteem; whose learning and wisdom, quickness and vivacity, may justly challenge a regard: such abilities must yield very agreeable entertainment, when in the possession of men, who are good and of a mild temper. This nearly concerns all good christians; and young men especially, when they appear in the world, ought to have a particular regard to it: their future happiness depending so much on the qualifications of those, with whom they converse. It may be, they have received good principles in their education; yet they want practice, to confirm the habits of virtue; and courage, to resist the allurements of vice, when enticed by wicked companions. Do we not daily see, they are apt to catch at any thing which indulges and countenances their inclinations? And why? Because, when they have most need of prudence, they have least of it; for, though they be not by degrees entirely corrupted; yet the horror they ought to have for sin is very much abated, by their seeing it

*Its impor-
tance to
youth.*

frequently practised. Consequently, fire may as well be taken into a man's bosom without burning, and pitch be touched without defiling; as bad company frequented and delighted in, without partaking of the bad effects thereof.

VIII. The last relation is that between **MASTERS** and **SERVANTS**. The servant must submit to, and do, all his master's lawful commands: for, though he owe his master no obedience, against the laws of God, or the laws of his country; yet, when he enters into service, he gives up his time and labour by agreement to his master, for wages, keeping, and protection; and must fulfil the conditions, upon which he is admitted to serve: according to that of the Apostle: 'Servants, be obedient to them, that are your masters according to the flesh; not with grumbling and stubbornness, but with fear and trembling, singleness of heart, as unto Christ; with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord; and not to men.' Therefore, although a master be churlish, and use his servants ill; they must bear with him, and submit cheerfully, because of the commandment of the Lord; who has promised, and is also able, to reward them for the same.

It a servant should be so unjust, as to waste that time, and spare that labour, which is not his; let *Faithfulness.* him recollect, that they are his master's by contract; and his master ought to have the advantage of them, because sold unto him: it would therefore be as just for a master, to detain part of a servant's wages contracted for; as it is for a servant, to waste and misemploy that time, and spare that labour, which is his master's by contract. A servant has no more right to his master's money, than the master has a right to his servant's time and labour; and, if the one stand not to his bargain, he thereby sets the other at liberty on his part: moreover, the intention of all masters in entertaining servants, is, to be assisted in their affairs; as they cannot do all things themselves, nor always be at home or abroad, where their business may require attendance: but this end is not answered, if there be a want of industry, faithfulness, and honesty, on the servant's part: the absence of the master is not supplied, when the servant does
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not act, as the master would, if he were present; and the master stays at home to his loss, if his servant abroad be false in any shape. On the other hand, a servant must not be unjust, in behalf of his master; nor impose upon the ignorance or want of skill, of those he deals with; he must no more recommend himself to his master's favour by over-reaching others, than injure him by unfaithfulness: his duty is, to be as useful as he can; but not to be dishonest. As the servant's duty is, to do all the good he can, and no mischief at all; therefore all waste and unnecessary profusion is so much damage to the master, and consequently to be avoided; because it is so much injury done to those, who should be profited by his service: he should behave as carefully, frugally, and industriously, in the absence of his master, as he would in his presence; for, to be frugal and industrious in the master's sight, but profuse and idle in his absence, is not only eye-service and hypocrisy, but falsehood and dishonesty. Many think it well, if they do not directly defraud their masters of their money or substance; whereas there is little difference, betwixt a profuse waste of their masters goods or time, and defrauding them of something feloniously. Do not their masters pay for their profusion? And is it not, then, a kind of robbery? But, of all thefts, the worst is breach of trust: for, servants having given their faith, to be just and honest; their villainy is greater than that of others; who, though they steal more, have not bound themselves (as servants do) to be honest, and to secure their masters, to the best of their abilities, from others: and for this reason it is, the law makes it treason in a servant, to kill his master during his servitude.

As nothing is so necessary to a servant, as the reputation of being just and honest; so nothing is more certain to undo them, than a bad fame, and the suspicion of false dealing with their masters: they have nothing to depend upon, but the hopes of lying concealed, and that their thefts will never be discovered; which hopes are yet so often disappointed, that very few (who have for any time been guilty of this practice) escape being found out; and that ruins their character. The reputation of

*The danger
of Disho-
nesty in
servants.*

servants is so valuable, that many masters will not charge them downright with a sin, though well enough assured that they are guilty: others have cause to suspect their servants; but, for prudential reasons, will not accuse them: and others see it, but will not irritate too far, and make their servants desperate by the publication, hoping they will reform. But servants are much deceived, if they think all are ignorant, who are silent; and that they are unsuspected, because not charged with dishonesty: by this rule hired servants should measure their safety. Indulgence and forbearance would not be discreetly used by masters, to those, who are so moveable and fugitive, as to be always wandering from place to place; and should not be borne with, a moment, in their wicked devices: but kindness is very proper to be shewn, to servants of a better rank, who are tied by covenants for a term of time. Wicked servants should consider, that, whether their wickedness be discovered or not, they are open to the eye of God; and their false practices will always be a burthen to their conscience: the fruits of injustice may gratify some vain longing for the present; but, when that is over, the mind is immediately disquieted at what is past, and afraid of shame and discovery; and (knowing, that fact must be repented of, before it can be pardoned) is much more uneasy, than the denial of those desires could have made it. Thus a false servant drives a bad bargain; when, for so little profit, he gives away the peace and quiet of his soul.

Let not a servant presume so much upon his own good qualifications, as to dare to answer again: *Submission to rebuke.* this (according to the Apostle's interpretation) is adding to the crime of purloining:

And St. Peter judges it so necessary, that a servant should be patient and meek under the rebukes of a master; that he directs servants, when they suffer wrongfully, to bear it with patience, as a thing acceptable to God. But, if they be punished or rebuked for a fault, it is not sufficient, that they answer not again; they must also mend their fault, as a proof of their due submission to their master's will for God's sake.

Lastly,

Lastly, A servant must diligently attend, on all the duties of his place; and avoid idleness, sloth, gaming, company-keeping, and every other *Diligence*. irregular course, which tends to the prejudice or neglect of his master's business; because a negligent servant can never be accounted either faithful or obedient to his master. Moderate labour has advantages, which servants do not think of: it makes their necessary service in time grow easy: for, as repeated acts beget habits, and things habitual become easy and familiar to us; so continued labours, if done with moderation, beget activity, when strength and pains are discreetly proportioned. Industry (then) is truly the servant's interest, as well as the master's; for such, as have served with industry and diligence, are secure of better credit and more success in their after life. Hence we may judge, why many servants, when they become masters, succeed ill, notwithstanding their desires of thriving: it is, because they have not industry, and cannot take the pains truly necessary in their station. Skill and good husbandry will not do, without great industry, in our several ways; which will not come when called for, but must be laid up before by use. Experience teaches, that the better servants are to their masters, the better they will succeed, when they manage their own affairs; and all good qualifications are to be attained by use: when the mind is susceptible of impression, and pliable, and the limbs will bend to their work, this is the time of making industry and labour easy to us. All the care servants take, and the pains they are at, are truly their own at the last; all the skill and understanding they get, is a treasure for themselves, laid up until they have the greatest need.

The state of servitude is necessary, by the appointment of the wise Creator: the world cannot be governed and maintained, without it; and it is their lot, to be instrumental to the publick good in that state of life. This is no token of God's displeasure: He does not in any wise forbid them, to use honest means of making themselves free, as soon as they can; but commands them to behave, as becomes their condition, with submission and

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humility,

humility, with obedience, diligence, and industry, with truth and justice, faithfulness and honesty. It is true, the state of servitude is accounted the meanest and the most miserable of all others; yet it may be made easy: servants have more of the labours of life, but they have less of the cares; their bodies are more fatigued and exercised, but their minds are less perplexed: they are only concerned in one matter; to do, what lies before them; whilst others have a world of things to cumber their minds; their whole care is, to their masters; whereas, it may be, their masters must count and humour all they deal with. They generally have only themselves to provide for; their masters have wives, children, and relations: scarcity or dearth affects them not; and, if publick mischiefs oppress the nation, they feel little of them, though even the government should be changed: their contribution to the support of the public is very trifling; they pay no taxes, lose no gainful employments, suffer not by the malice or insolence of parties, undergo no calumny or slander; are less distressed, and suffer less hardships, than those, who live in a higher station. It is not possible for all men, to be rich, or great, or possessed of places, or to be governors, or masters, or great traders, or remarkable in any faculty; yet all men may be honest, virtuous, and religious; may all live in God's favour in this world, and be happy in the next: it is therefore a comfortable consideration for servants (however despicable their condition may appear in the sight of men) that in God's eyes, who understands the value of his creatures, they are of equal worth with the great and noble: He has given them bo-

No distinction in heaven.

dies as beautiful and useful, and faculties of mind as good; has made them capable of being virtuous, has redeemed them with the same precious blood of Christ; opened the same gates of heaven, and prepared for them the same glory in that kingdom of everlasting bliss.

IX. On the other side, in reason, in justice, and by God's commands, *Masters* owe several duties to their Servants; and are as much obliged, to perform their part of the contract, as servants theirs. Every relation is built on a contract,

Masters owe to their servants justice.

contract, either supposed, or actually agreed upon, betwixt the parties related; and each party is obliged, to perform his part of the contract, upon which the relation stands: a master therefore is faithless and unjust, and breaks his covenant; who suffers his servant to be ignorant or unskilful in the profession, which he covenanted to make him understand; for he, who serveth, is deceived, and loses what he bargained for, and for which he pledged his faith and service. To withhold the price and reward of service, which has been bargained for, is a foul practice: the reward is the servant's due; he has already paid for it; and to defraud him of it, is to rob him. And as it is injustice to deny, what is the servant's due; so, when the servants (through the power of their masters) cannot obtain that due by legal courses; they are oppressed, as well as wronged. These masters are often punished, even by their own vices: whilst their servants live with them, they commonly copy their vices, and amongst the rest, their injustice; and, by living upon their masters, repay themselves with interest. It is still a greater hardship, to detain the wages of poor men, who subsist by their daily labour; or to withhold either food, raiment, or any profit a servant has contracted for: and the injustice is the same, whether you bargain by the day or year.

A master must not think, he has performed the whole of his duty, when he has justly complied with the contract, agreed upon with his servant: it is moreover his duty, not only to admonish and

Admonition.

reprove his servant for any neglect or injustice, discoverable in his own worldly concerns: but, if he find him deceitful, or telling lyes, or otherwise offending God; he must tell him of his fault, must endeavour to reclaim him; and (with holy David) threaten, that no deceitful person shall dwell in his house, nor he, who telleth lyes, continue in his service. Besides, the law of the land has provided (for the more convenient and better instruction of servants of all kinds) that 'all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices, which have not learned their catechism, to come to the church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the curate;

‘ until such time, as they have learned all, that is there appointed for them to learn.’ *

Yet, after all, the giving them good advice, and affording them opportunities of serving God, at home and abroad; the instructing them, according to their leisure and abilities, in the rules of honesty and justice, truth and faithfulness; the exciting them to diligence and industry, and encouraging them therein (comparatively speaking) will be very inconsiderable, and of very small force, either towards fixing in their mind right principles, or forming in their manners a habit of virtuous practice; if, in the private life and conversation of those, by whom families are to be directed, there appear profaneness and impiety, or lewdness and debauchery, or tyrannical oppressiveness, and violent and unreasonable passions. How affectionate soever, the exhortations of the preachers of the gospel be; how often soever, repeated instructions be given to young persons, either in schools or elsewhere: yet, if the examples they find at home, in the practice of common life, be vicious, debauched, and all together contrary to the precepts and admonitions given them in form; the effect of such instructions cannot but be very inconsiderable.

Again; *Moderation* should always accompany the master's commands and impositions: they must not oppress their servants, but have a merciful respect to their capacity and strength. The institution of the Jewish sabbath was partly, that servants might be relieved, and not consume a miserable life in continued labours, without some intermission: and, though a master ought not to permit his servant, to live in idleness; yet a servant is not to be consumed with toil, nor deprived of the benefit of serving God; he is not presumed, to consent to such a bargain, though his time and labour be his master's property.

* See the Rubrick at the end of the Church Catechism.

There is other care to be taken of servants, in health and sickness; which is the most likely to make good servants: we should encourage them in well-doing, by using them with good-nature and bounty, according as their faithfulness, diligence, and piety recommend them to our favour; there being none of so abject a spirit, as not to strive, to make amends for kind, good-natured treatment. Therefore, Masters, give to your servants that which is equal and just; knowing, that ye have also a master in heaven; one, from whom ye expect the performance of those precious promises, which of his grace he hath made to you; one, from whom ye look for all the benefits, temporal and spiritual, which are fit for him to give, or you to receive; one, who hath promised, to be a bounteous master to all his faithful and obedient servants, and to shew mercy to such, as shew mercy to others. This is farther enforced, by what our Saviour saith of himself; 'I am among you, as he that serveth,' not only to give his disciples an example of humility and condescension, but to sanctify all conditions of life; and to shew, that God looks not with man's eyes, that he hath no respect to persons; that he regards not, birth or fortune, quality or title: but that the meanest are acceptable to him, if they do his will; that virtue and religion only recommend men to his favour, of which servants are as capable, as the rich, the mighty, and the most honourable. Wherefore, as he hath made them partakers of the same grace here, and capable of the same glory hereafter; so he commands them to be treated with mercy and compassion. Therefore we should not use servants, as beasts of burthen: to give ill language and words, which no man is deserving of, is the worst way in the world of shewing superiority; for, the service is never the better performed, for upbraiding language. Those servants, who perform their duty, do it better, and live more comfortably, for good words: Neither must masters be rigorous in punishing servants, when faulty; but correct them with deliberation and mercy, and upon just occasions.

In fine; we seek in vain for ease and happiness in liberty, and disengagement from our relative duties: for, it is evident, that (as this world is ordered) it is impossible to be at ease, without a faithful discharge of the several obligations laid upon us, by the relations we contract amongst ourselves. How can we possibly be happy; when we cease to be good magistrates, good subjects, good christians, good fathers, good sons and good brethren, good husbands and wives, good friends, good masters and good servants? As we are sociable creatures, we must have all the social virtues; nor can we expect to receive any, whilst we pay no duty, to whom it is due from us.

SUNDAY X.

- I. *Of negative and positive Justice to our NEIGHBOUR; and first to his Soul; II. Secondly to his Body: of murder, and the several ways of committing it; as also of duelling: the heinousness, punishments, and strange discoveries of Murder. III. Of maiming, wounding, stripes, and fighting, &c. IV. In what cases it is lawful to shed Blood. V. Of Self-murder; its infamy, causes, danger; and the means to prevent it: and of melancholy persons and prisoners, that make away with themselves. VI. Of Justice, in regard to the Possessions of our Neighbour; and first concerning his Wife, secondly his Goods: of Injustice and Oppression. VII. Of Theft; including the not paying of Debts, bad securities, vexatious law suits, protections, and frauds, not discharging bonds, securities, promises, and breach of Trust: and VIII. Of Stealing.*

‘ **M**Y duty towards my Neighbour (contained in the *sixth* and *following* COMMANDMENTS) is

Our duty to our neighbour. ‘ to love him, as myself; and to do unto all men, as I would they should do unto me: ‘ to hurt no body, by word or deed; to be true and just, in all my dealings: to bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: to keep my hands, from picking and stealing; and my tongue, from evil speak-

‘ speaking, lying, and flandering ; to keep my body, in
 ‘ temperance, soberness, and chastity : not to covet nor
 ‘ desire other men’s goods ; but to learn and labour tru-
 ‘ ly, to get mine own living ; and to do my duty in that
 ‘ state of life, unto which it shall please God to call me.’*

The laws of God, relating to the Life of our neighbour, are transgressed by all real mischiefs and lasting injuries whatsoever, done by one man to another, or brought by any man upon himself ; and by all debaucheries, whereby men destroy themselves, or where-into they draw others, to the ruin of the health of their bodies, and the reason of their minds : they are also transgressed, by all wilful frauds ; by deliberate adulterations of things, made use of either in food or medicines ; and by every thing, whereby any man receives detriment in his person. It is not, in any of these cases, a sufficient excuse, in point of religion and morality, to alledge, that the evil was not intended. Every man is answerable, not only for the evil he directly intended ; but also, for the accidental ill consequences of that action, which it was his direct duty not to have performed : for, our duty to our neighbour is founded on JUSTICE and CHARITY.

JUSTICE consists in doing no wrong or injury to any man’s *soul or body, possessions or credit* ; and, in giving every man his whole due or right. *Justice negative and positive.*

The Soul of man is an invisible substance, and therefore not to be hurt by any outward violence, to which the body is subject : yet it is capable, of many impressions ; by which it is, not only hurt and wounded, but even killed ; if we consider it in a natural sense. *To the Soul.*

The Soul, in the natural signification, is the heart, or mind, or spirit, of a man ; which (all men know) may be broken, by sorrow and afflictions. Consequently, malicious and spiteful men, who without cause vex and grieve their neighbour, hurt and wrong his soul, and are guilty of a breach of justice. *In the natural sense.*

* See the Second answer, after the Commandments, in the Church Catechism.

In the spiritual sense: The Soul, considered in its spiritual state, is that part of man, which must live for ever in an eternal state of glory or misery. As (under this consideration) it may be hurt, by sin in this world, and that punishment in the next, which is the consequence of sin; so that person, who tempts another to sin, is as much accessory to the hurt of his soul, as a murderer is to the death of the body he has killed. Sin is directly opposite to that grace, by which alone

Drawing to sin the greatest injury. the soul is enabled to live for ever in the sight of God; and so becomes the disease and wound thereof. The

Direct means of it. Soul is wounded directly, by every one, who commands any under his authority, to do an unlawful action; or adviseth another to do a wicked thing; or enticeth others, either by pleasure or profit, to commit any wickedness; and this crime is much enhanced; when men help either to contrive, or to put their wicked devices in execution. The Soul is

Indirect. also wounded indirectly, by giving a bad example; especially by those, who carry authority in their station of life; for, many are so void of grace, as to copy other men's vices, as they do their dress, for fashion sake: again, by not shewing a dislike, to what we hear or see done in defiance of God and his laws; and thirdly, by justifying and defending any evil or sinful act, in themselves or others: and, finally, by making a mock at sin, and contemptuously deriding the faith of Christ, through which alone we are to be saved.

As these are the means, by which men commonly injure the Soul of their neighbour, by drawing him into intemperance, luxury, drunkenness, or uncleanness, and many other vices; it behoves every one to examine himself, how often and how many he has hurt by any of these particulars. It is not sufficient, to say; I have wronged no man by maiming his body, by stealing his goods, or undermining his character: whomsoever we draw to sin, we have endeavoured to bring to eternal punishment: this is (as it were) secretly killing the soul, under the pretence of friendship; and is as much worse, than the murder of the body, as the soul is preferable to the

the body, and eternal misery is more to be dreaded than death. But, such a murderer cannot hope to escape unpunished, at the last day: for Christ declares, that, whosoever (by tempting, enticing or encouraging any to sin) shall offend any of these little ones which believe in me; it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Whoever is thus accessory to another's sin, becomes also subject to, and has reason to expect the same punishment; unless he begin early, to *Heartily to bewail it.* judge and bewail himself for all these things, wherein he has wronged his neighbour; and firmly resolve, never to cast a stumbling block in his way for the future. If it be possible, he must also endeavour all he can, by admonition and good *Endeavour to repair it.* example, to reform him he had caused to sin.

II. *Negative Justice*, in regard to men's Bodies, forbids us, to do wrong and violence. The highest degree of this kind of Injustice, is killing the body; the sin, forbidden in the *sixth* COMMANDMENT, *Thou shalt do no Murder*: that is, Thou shalt not take away the life of thy neighbour; either by open violence, in defiance of the laws of God and man; or secretly or treacherously, by the means of another's sword; or by false accusation; or by poison, or any other private means whatever; which are too often suggested by an old grudging, or by a covetous or ambitious heart, to satisfy a malicious passion, or to make way to some profit or preferment. It is also too often the practice of loose women, to kill their infants to hide their own shame. They who entice others to drinking or other excesses (which bring on diseases; and, by weakening the body, not only deprive them of health, the most valuable comfort of life, but thereby hasten the time of death) cannot hope, to be clear from their blood in the sight of God: again; whoever excites or prompts another to such a pitch of anger and revenge, or blows up the coals of dissention between others; certainly cannot be guiltless but must expect part of the punishment, if it end in murder.

Of Negative justice to the body.

In respect of the life.

Several ways of committing Murder.

Duelling,

Duelling, or fighting in private quarrels, is an open breach of this commandment, because disallowed by divine authority : the guilt of murder therefore is chargeable upon persons engaging therein ; the plea of self-preservation being utterly foreign to the conditions and circumstances of him, who formally gives or accepts a challenge : nay, he adds to the sin, of making an outrageous attempt upon his neighbour's life, by throwing himself unnecessarily into the utmost danger of losing not only his life, but his soul also. Those, who die in such engagements, go into the other world, not only void of charity, but glowing hot with wrath and fury ; and, when these qualities have the least possession of their souls, what society of spirits can that be, which their souls are qualified for in the next world ? But, even should they not perish in the conflict, is it worth a man's while, to run into the hazard of suffering eternal misery, for the sake of redressing an injury, or resenting an affront ? Consequently, all arguments of human invention, to countenance such a wickedness, must be evasive and deluding : to fear men more than God, is the most dishonourable misapplication and degeneracy of fear. There is nothing religion doth more severely forbid, than this revenging of injuries in a private way : nor is there any thing more strictly enjoined, than forbearance and forgiveness ; even so strictly, that we cannot, without hypocrisy, say our daily prayers, if we be not in charity with all the world. Whoever therefore engages in duels, through fear of suffering little trifling calumnies and reproaches (which, in the judgment of the wisest men, are not really such) doth at once forfeit all just pretensions, to true courage, honour, and generosity of mind ; and all claim and title to eternal life.

This precept extends, according to the interpretation of Christ and his apostles, to our Words and secret Intentions. Our blessed Lord expressly applies it, to the several degrees of causeless anger, breaking forth into contumelious and reproachful language : and St. John says, ' Whosoever
' hateth

*Murder,
committed
in thought.*

‘hateth his brother, is a murderer; and ye know, that
‘no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.’ Such,
as have not sufficient degrees of natural courage, or want
opportunities actually to defile their hands with blood;
may yet sacrifice their neighbour in their secret thoughts,
and indulge their imagination in the view of those mortal
wounds, which they dare not give: and men, who are
afraid to handle the instruments of death, may shoot out
their arrows, even bitter words; and pierce *In word.*
the souls of their brethren, with the expressions
of cruelty, despitelness, and scorn. These men
(however) have just cause to fear, the blood thus shed in
fancy and conception only, will be laid to their charge;
and the rewards of the false or cruel tongue (as of the
iniquity itself) will be mighty and sharp arrows, with hot
burning coals: for, whosoever is angry with his brother
without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and
whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha, shall be in dan-
ger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool,
shall be in danger of hell-fire.

Whether we judge of the guilt of this transgression,
from the indignity offered unto God, or *The Hei-*
from the injury done to man, or from the *nousness of*
punishments expressly denounced against it, *Murder.*
or from the anguish and horror it is apt to
leave upon the mind; we shall find reason, to assign it a
place amongst the loudest of crying sins. The first in-
stance of murder was followed close, by perplexity, op-
pression of spirit, and despair: ‘My punishment is great-
er, than I can bear;’ (or rather, ‘Mine iniquity is
greater, than can be forgiven’) said Cain, when he slew
his brother: and, that weight of confusion (which natu-
ral conscience scarce ever fails to lay upon such sinners)
being increased by the expression of God’s indignation,
he cried out; ‘Every one, that findeth me, shall slay me;
‘the whole creation must be alarmed, and stand ready to
‘execute vengeance on me.’ The Lord abhors the
blood-thirsty: he has expressly forbidden any mercy or
compassion to be shewn to a murderer; and will accept
of no satisfaction for his life: he has declared by Moses,
that, ‘if a man come presumptuously upon his neigh-
bour, and slay him with guile; thou shalt take him
‘from

‘ from mine altar, that he may die.’ Murder is an indignity offered to God ; for, in his own image made he man : besides which there are special aggravations of this crime, in the injury done to man. Other injuries may be repaired, or admit of some satisfaction ; but this is utterly irreparable : other injuries may rob a man of his estate or reputation, or of some particular temporal satisfaction and advantages ; but this is the summary of mischief, and deprives him at once of every temporal satisfaction whatsoever : nay, who can tell, but this injury may prove fatal to the sufferer’s soul, as well as his body ; and at once consign him to the first and second death, by depriving him of that time to repent, which may be necessary, and might have been sufficient, to the accomplishment of his salvation ? Should the injury not fall upon him under a state of impenitence, and press him down into everlasting destruction ; yet must the weight of it even in relation to his view of that eternal state, fall heavily upon him : who can bear the thoughts, of being thrown headlong into the other world ; instead of moving thither, through the common course of nature and providence ? Even the best of men would be glad of a few minutes at the last, to review and mourn over their miscarriages and defects ; of a little space of time, in the conclusion of their lives, to prepare them for their appearance before the glorious and unspotted presence of God : and, if these advantages be so desirable, how grating must that injury be, which deprives men of them ?

The great punishment attending it. Shall they then escape God’s justice, who thus dare to wrest (as it were) the power of life and death out of the hand of God ? You have read, of the punishment of Cain : let the dreadful death of Jezebel and Ahab, which God sent upon them for the murder of innocent Naboth, also deter you from this worst of sins.

There are many instances of the vengeance of God upon murderers, who perished miserably ; as Absalom, for the death of his brother Amnon ; and Rechab and Baanah, who were themselves put to death, by the very person they thought to please by the murder of Ishboeth : but it would be needless, to multiply examples from sacred history or ancient times ; when every age produ-

ceth sufficient evidences, that no murderer can escape the just wrath of God. By the law of nature therefore, this crime was always judged worthy of the severest punishment; the very barbarians reasoning among themselves, that (whatever escapes he may make) vengeance suffereth not a murderer to live: by the laws of all civilized nations in the world, it has always been punished capitally; and sometimes with the most cruel kinds of death: and, by the law of Moses, God commanded, that no satisfaction should be taken, for the life of a murderer; but the guilty person was to be taken, even from God's altar, that he might die.

God hath armed every sensitive part of the creation, against this wickedness: a man's own conscience, which must be privy to the sin, not only racks him, and becomes a punishment to him, worse than death; but frequently compels him to confess the crime, that justice may be executed on his body; and often drives him, even unto the murder of himself: nay, the very brute creatures have frequently detected this unpardonable barbarity. They therefore, who duly consider this sin with its punishments, should guard against every thing, which may tempt them to commit it. If we give way to passion, there is no security, that it will not end in murder: anger being a madness, which deprives us of our reason; so that we cannot tell, what we do, when influenced thereby: if malice get men into its power; or if covetousness, ambition, lust, or any other sinful desire, get dominion over them; they will not stick at murder, to serve their wicked purposes. Again, as intemperance will cut off the life of man, we must, not only, not entice a man to drunkenness, nor keep him company; but we must ourselves refrain from that vice; because our example may draw others to do the same. And finally (not to mention the many other cautions against this sin of murder, which are easily to be inferred from some of these heads) let us take care, neither to encourage, nor contribute to any contention, which may take away a man's life; so shall our hands be innocent from blood, the shedding of which is against the command of God.

The strange discoveries of murder.

Guard against the approaches of this sin.

III. Neither

III. Neither may we dismember, maim, or deface our neighbour's person : this sin, being committed wilfully, if it be not a direct and effectual breach of God's command, is at least a partial violation of it. The judgment of God has abundantly declared the guilt of such practices; whereby one of the lightest instances of these crimes, even in the case of a bond-servant, the master's cruelty of striking out a tooth, was the servant's discharge from his servitude. Besides; these outrages have a natural tendency to the death of the party, which frequently follows; or disable the sufferer from getting his bread, which in the event may prove a more lingering and tormenting death: and, if we be accountable for the consequences of our actions to God, why not to our fellow-creatures? Does not every one dread the loss of a limb; and would we not do and suffer any thing, and part with any of our worldly goods, to preserve it in time of danger? Is it doing, as we would be done by, to attempt that to another, which is so intolerable to ourselves? The injury is highly aggravated, if the injured person happen to be poor, that he must labour for his living, and perchance the only support of a poor family: he, who deprives such a person of his limbs, by which he maintained himself, is a man of blood; for he that taketh away his neighbour's living, slayeth him. What satisfaction then can be made, in such a case? It is certain, we cannot restore the limb: we must maintain him then, if we be able; if not, we must relieve and support him by our own extraordinary labour: for whatever new afflictions, or what sin soever this brings him into, we must answer for them before the judgment-seat of Christ.

*Necessity
of making
what sa-
tisfaction
we can.*

This commandment (by just interpretation) may be extended, to all kinds of injury; done the body of our neighbours; such, as Wounds, stripes and injuries. It we be commanded to be merciful, to the beasts that perish; much more is this cruelty and unmercifulness to our fellow-creatures, forbidden. We must do justice to every man, in publick and in private: *we must do to others, as we would*

would they should do to us; not what other people actually do to us, but what we would they should do unto us. If we go no farther, than the act of retaliation, as the common practice is; and justify ourselves in this manner; 'Such a man refused to do me a kind office, when it was in his power; and why should I serve him?' 'He treated me with rigour and severity, when he had opportunity; and why should I not treat him in like manner?' This is not doing, as we would be done by; it is the language of passion, not of reason, or a mind filled with the grace of God. Can we be justified, in doing what we condemn in another? Can the same thing be a fault in another, and a virtue in us? By the law of nature, we are allowed to defend ourselves, but never to take vengeance: and christianity teaches us, not to measure our own, by the behaviour of other men. Nothing, but excessive pride and contempt of others, can ever induce a man, to wound one of the same nature with himself, who cannot (without the utmost discontent) bear the least reproachful word. But what excuse can those persons plead, who take pleasure in the cruelties they exercise on their poor neighbours, upon vain pretences, and without any mercy; or those inhuman tempers, who set others a fighting, and take pleasure therein?

The case of Abraham, in designing and attempting to sacrifice his son, does not fall under any of these reasons or observations; but depends upon circumstances, which were peculiar to his own person, and such as never were, nor ever can be, used as a precedent: nor with any colour of reason, be assigned as a vindication of any private person, who should make an attempt upon his neighbour's life. He was called to this, by a revelation from God; and therefore must not be pretended to be imitated by any one, who cannot bring an undoubted proof of the same authority. Every private person, therefore, is chargeable with the guilt of the sin of murder; who, without a revelation from heaven, and not ignorantly or accidentally, but knowingly and designedly, without any necessity arising from the imminent danger of his own destruction, takes away or invades his neighbour's life, by open assault or secret contrivance,

in

in person or by agreement with another, by command or persuasion, consent or consultation, suggestions or insinuations, bearing false witness or hiring others so to do, or by any other means, but those already mentioned above.

IV. Yet, (as there is no law, but will admit of mitigation) both passion and reason have endeavoured, to find an exception to this commandment; the former, striving to quiet a reproving conscience by various pretences and false colours; the other, clearly explaining the true intention of God's precept, shewing in what

When taking a man's life away is not murder.

case it is lawful to take away a man's life. We may lawfully take away a man's life, in the case of self-preservation. This is so certain and obvious, that it can scarce admit of any mistake; when the danger is manifest, and a man must (unavoidably) either give or receive the fatal stroke. We may lawfully kill a man in battle, if we be satisfied, that a war is undertaken by a state or kingdom to support and maintain its just rights, or to preserve itself or its allies from utter ruin. It is needless to prove, that magistrates are invested with a just authority, to inflict capital punishment upon offenders; or that it is just, to cut off the corrupted members of the body, politic as well as natural, for the preservation and benefit of the whole. The innocence of that person is also unquestionable; who, through ignorance, or unforeseen and unavoidable accident, deprives another of his life: no action is properly criminal, which is against the will; for, the nature of every action, with regard to good or evil, is determined by the intention: so that, where there is no intention of doing the action at all, there can be no morality or immorality in that action. Hence, under the Mosaical dispensation, a sanctuary was, by divine appointment, provided for every one; who was so innocently unfortunate, as to kill his neighbour ignorantly and unawares; lest the avenger of blood pursue and slay him, before his innocence could be sufficiently cleared up. These are the cases, wherein the lives of men may be taken away without sin. To distinguish these cases it is, that the words of the commandment are thus rendered, 'Thou shalt do no murder.' Murder therefore is the killing of a man, not by misfortune, but with design;

sign; not for our own defence and preservation in necessity, but out of malice and hatred towards our neighbour; not as destroying a publick enemy, but a person with whom we ought to have lived under the natural ties of friendship and humanity, or at least of mutual forgiveness; not as bringing a malefactor to execution for the preservation of the commonwealth, but as cutting off an innocent member to the hurt and loss of the publick.

SUNDAY X. PART II.

V. What has hitherto been said concerning the killing of another, must in proportion be understood likewise concerning self-murder. No man *Self-murder.* has a right, to anticipate the call of God, or to bereave the publick of a member, by destroying himself. Every person, who knowingly and wilfully destroys his own life, is guilty of murder: God only, who gave us our life, has a right to take it away; every man therefore, who offers violence to his own life, does manifestly invade the prerogative, and usurp the right and authority, of God. It is true, among the heathens there are many examples of persons, who fell by their own hands, upon some pressing extremities; yet their rules, laws, and reasonings, forbid such practices. Examples against rules are of no authority. Men of loose principles always have false notions of liberty, honour, and courage: and, though we live in an age, when every extravagant and wicked thing is justified by some wretch or other; yet we should be loth to have posterity believe, this was the general sense and judgment of our age.

Let us then consult the wise; the laws, the rules, and reasonings of the grave and governing part: *To be abhorred.* from them we shall learn, that self-murder was an abhorred practice; that (whatever pretence it made, to honour and courage) it was but cowardice, fear, and a mark of a poor spirit, sinking under the common calamities of nature: a practice, to be abhorred and condemned with all our zeal, to be guarded against with all our care, reason and religion. We should therefore walk in the ways of God, and pour out our prayers for his preventing and assisting grace; that his fear may ever be before us, and that temptations to such

such impiety may never overcome us. Considering the love of ourselves, the inhumanity of the crime, and the dangers run by those who are guilty of self-murder; it is surprizing, how any person can resolve upon such a desperate self-condemning action: especially as they, who murder themselves, know and confess, they are bound by the sixth commandment, not to commit murder; the letter and sense of which command reaches, not only to our neighbour, but ourselves also. Though a man were weary of life, and sought for death; as people in pain, do for ease; and those wearied with labour, for rest: yet would it be unlawful, to give him the satisfaction he desired, by killing him; because it would be murdering that single man; and because of the mischiefs, such a death may bring upon his family. Whence we ought to remark, that murder does not barely consist, in the violence offered to a man against his will; but in taking away a life, which no man has a right to take away, by laws human or divine: and, as a man has no right himself, so neither can he convey any right to another, to take away his own life. Yet observation proves; that, when men engage in wicked practices, and find they are brought to shame or danger, their minds are not equal to their burthen; so that they can bear the guilt, though not the shame.

Those, who have not the fear of God, nor their own salvation, before their eyes, should consider; *its infamy.* what sorrow and confusion are unavoidably occasioned, to the nearest friends they have in the world, by parting from them in such a manner. Neither poverty, nor bodily afflictions, are so hard to be borne; as the shame, reproach, or infamy, or even the apprehensions, of such a woeful death. Will you entail, on your kindred and family, the reproaches and ill-usage of an insulting and uncharitable world, with perplexing doubts and fears concerning your condition in the other life? What ingratitude is this, to do mischief and dishonour to those you love? These considerations had hitherto their weight with heathens: and shall christians break through all considerations, of their own honour, interest, and duty; and not be content to live; at least, until they can die, without doing wrong or mischief to their

their friends? Did not the frequent practice of unhappy people convince us, it may be perpetrated; could any man imagine, that a Christian (who believes, the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness; that, without repentance, sins cannot be forgiven; and that after death there is no repentance: who professeth the faith, of Christ crucified; and hath covenanted with God in baptism, to take up the cross, and bear it, if need be, to death) would, in the impatience of his soul under some calamity, deliberately chuse to throw his burthen off, by committing a sin, of which he knows he never can repent; and hazard the dreadful consequence to everlasting ages. To prevent so rash an hazard, we should have our minds prepared, and our affections subdued; that we may not be destitute of succour from reason, or give ourselves up to the guidance of present passion.

Those, who fall into these desperate resolutions, are such, as highly indulge and yield to their passions; so that, when grievous accidents befall them, they know not, where they are, *Causes thereof.* nor whither to turn: not able to bear any loss or fail, from the condition they were in, they abandon themselves to despair of God's help and mercy. They place their whole happiness, in the possession of riches, in the enjoyment of honours, and in the praise of men: and, when riches make to themselves wings, and fly away; when they fall from their honours and dignities; they know not how to breathe in any other air, nor to want the courtships and respects, which were wont to be paid, not to their persons, but to their power and interest: when they sink in their reputation, they are dejected to the lowest ebb; and are afraid, that every eye views them with contempt, and that every tongue is reproaching them.

Can this be a sufficient plea for self-murder? No. The miseries men endure, will end in death at last, which may come quickly; and the sins, *Its danger.* which brought them to that misery, will be forgiven upon repentance, be they ever so great and many: but the course they pitch upon to relieve themselves, is a sin, which admits of no repentance; but consigns them to

eternal pains and sorrows, the punishment of murder in general: nay; they expose themselves, in a particular manner, to the greater condemnation, by some particular sentiments and dispositions, which are commonly the root and foundation of this unnatural sin. Do not those men who destroy themselves to avoid present sufferings, resolve, that God shall not dispose of them as he pleaseth; but that they will wrest their lives out of his hands, and not suffer him to prolong or continue them beyond the limits of their own will? If this be their language, as by their actions it seems to be; what can be expected, but that God should execute the fiercest of his vengeance upon their disobedience? If pride, and envy, and ambition, have so much power over their minds; that they will violently remove themselves out of the world, because they are not advanced to a more advantageous situation in it: what can they reasonably expect or imagine, but that they should experience Solomon's observation, in the most extensive sense of it; that pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall? What foundation can there be of hope, that God will forgive a flagrant sin, without the sinner's repentance for the same? Is it to be conceived, that a man should repent of a sin, in the commission of which he ends his life?

When men come into those perilous hours, they are generally deaf to all reason, and listen only to the suggestions of their passions; and, if they be not prepared beforehand to withstand such assaults, they seldom do it when the danger approaches. It is more in men's power, to be innocent, and to keep out of difficulties and straits; than, being involved, to deliver themselves from the distracted counsels and suggestions of their despairing minds, which are such, as all men startle at and abhor, when free of such distractions. A man, overwhelmed with misery, is not inclined to ask, or capable of taking council, when offered: how much better is it therefore, to secure men from such principles, as occasion these perplexing thoughts, than retrieve them from the power and influence of them? It is observable, that few attempts of this kind are made, until religion be mastered, and its impressions

impressions effaced ; or men be so misguided, as to think these mischiefs may be done, and religion be safe.

Those unhappy people, who lie under the dreadful apprehension of God's anger, and (accounting themselves vessels of wrath, and fitted for destruction ; and not being able to live, under the torment of that thought) put an end to their miserable lives ; are most to be pitied whilst alive, and spared when dead : nothing can look so like distraction, as that distemperature of brain, which makes them act so strangely. If they be vessels of wrath, is this the way to ease them ? If they believe themselves, consigned to misery in the other world, what do they get by throwing themselves into that place of torment before the time appointed ? This is to die for fear of death ; and indeed a great deal more disastrous. But let them consider, that God is the best of Beings ; and that a Being, absolutely and necessarily good, can never intend any thing unmerciful or cruel. Nay farther ; it is the same thing, whether we consume ourselves by a slow, lingering poison, or dispatch ourselves by an immediate death : we are equally guilty of self-murder, whether we knowingly wear away the springs of life gradually (which is the case, when we abandon ourselves to wasting grief) or violently cut the thread of it at once asunder.

Of melancholy persons.

As to condemned criminals, who sometimes attempt to prevent their legal punishment by dispatching themselves ; do they think, they save themselves the shame of dying publicly ? Vain imagination ! What can these wretches propose, by falling into the hands of the living God sooner than they need, if they lived as long as God would let them live ? What can more resemble madness, than to believe, that Christ died for such as repent, and believe the gospel ; and yet distrust he died for me, who am so sorry for my sins, I would give the world (were it mine) that I never had offended God ; and am willing, rather to lose all the world, than commit the like any more ; and to purchase the favour of God with my blood, rather than that his displeasure should rise against me ? What can be liker distraction ; than, to be-

Of condemned prisoners.

lieve and repent, to sorrow and amend; and yet conclude ourselves vessels of wrath under God's vengeance?

VI. Having shewn, how far, and by what means, a man may injure his neighbour in his soul or body; I shall in the next place declare, in what manner a man may be wronged in his possessions: and, his *Wife* being the chief of them, I shall begin, with shewing the heinousness of a breach of the *seventh* COMMANDMENT; where it is said, *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Of injustice to our Neighbour, in regard to his possessions. His Wife.

To seduce a man's Wife from her husband's bed, is an act of the highest injustice, the greatest wrong, which can be done, not only to the man, but to his wife also. She is thereby robbed of her innocency, and deluded into the high road of eternal perdition, by bringing her into the guilt both of lust and perjury: and,

To the woman. certainly chills her proper affection, towards her own husband; which seldom fails to end in loathings, disgusts, and a multitude of other evils, which make the marriage state the most miserable. As

To the man. to the Husband; what greater injustice can be done him, than to rob him of the love and faithfulness, which is due to him from the wife of his bosom; and overwhelm him (if it be found out) with the most anxious pains of jealousy? Besides, the world is so unjust, as even to add to his sorrow, by reproaching the injured man with scorn and contempt, only because he is injured: and can it be less than theft and robbery, to burthen the injured husband, with providing for the fruits of his wife's adulterous practices? This is such an injury to the legitimate children, as can never be satisfied, without a restoration to the defrauded family, of as much, as the provision for the spurious offspring has taken from it. Under the Jewish law, the adulterers were to be stoned to death; because, it is presumed, no man can ever make a sufficient satisfaction, for so great an injury, to the soul and

The most irreparable.

and body of his neighbour. Other ill consequences of this vice are, that it propagates sickness and infirmities, both upon men's selves and their posterities; that it is destructive of human society, and of the public welfare: it separates the nearest relations; lays the ground of inextricable confusions, and implacable dissensions, in families; and oftentimes occasions public contentions, murders, and seditions: so that scarce from any other cause, have issued greater and more tragical events. This should prevail on those to repent, who now continue in this crime; for, though the Jewish law be abrogated, yet God's justice is still the same: his knowledge penetrates the most secret parts; and he will call men into judgment, and punish them with death eternal, for unrepented adulteries; which ought therefore to be lamented, with a whole life of penitential exercises.

Secondly, we must not injure our neighbour in his Goods; that is to say, in his possessions; *In his Goods.* whether houses, land, money, cattle, or any thing which is his property and right; by endeavouring to hurt, damage, or to defraud, or any ways get any of them for our own use, either through malice or covetousness. The Malice of this injustice appears, when no interest or profit can follow to the person, who takes a pleasure in hurting, damaging, or destroying *Malicious injustice.* the goods of his neighbour: This is an action, which most nearly resembles the continual practice of the devil, to undo others without doing himself any good: but it much exceeds him in wickedness; for he only envies creatures of another nature, whereas the malicious man persecutes those of his own nature.

Covetousness, and the injustice it causes, will be better understood, when considered under the distinct heads of oppression, theft, and deceit. *Covetous injustice.* Oppression is an open violence and force against our neighbour's goods; a sin, *Oppression.* condemned by all; against which, even those cry aloud, who practise it in some of its most criminal branches. No state or condition of men are secure from it: many rich, honourable, and powerful, nations, princes, and subjects, have been deprived of their rights, liberties,

erties, and estates, by it. Gifts, bribes, grandeur, and authority, have too often corrupted or over-awed a judge, and taken place of justice ; in which case all persons concerned, as well the lawyer who pleads, as he that gives sentence, are guilty of oppression. Again, whoever takes advantage of a poor man's need, and extorts too great a usury from him, under pretence of supplying his pressing necessities ; a griping landlord, who puts his tenants on the rack ; or those, who are in any wise entrusted with assessing, taxing, and rating their neighbours, and not only do it without justice and mercy, but too frequently lay hold of such opportunities to gratify some private pique or resentment : these, or any other extortioners, exercise but different branches of the sin of oppression. But let them remember the danger they risk ; for the Lord *God's vengeance against it.* has declared by the mouth of his prophet, that, ' He who hath oppressed the poor, and hath spoiled by violence, shall surely die ; his blood shall be upon him.' Solomon exhorts us, not to rob the poor, because he is poor ; neither to oppress the afflicted in the gate : for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those, who spoiled them.

VII. The *second* sort of this injustice is Theft ; which *Of Theft.* is an unlawful taking, using, or keeping our neighbour's property, either by force or fraud. The extent of this sin is wide and deep ; and discovers itself in defrauding our creditors, or with-holding, what it is our duty to pay or return ; and in taking from our neighbour, what he already possesses : so that all debts, stealing, deceit, or breach of trust, and deceit in traffick, are to be considered as parts of theft.

He, who lends to one man, and gives him credit for *Not paying what we owe.* money or commodities ; or accepts of security, for what he lends to another ; acquires a right, to be justly repaid, according to contract : the debtor hath only a right to use, what he borrows for his present convenience or necessity ; but the property remains in the hands of the creditor, who hath the same right to it, as when it was in his own custody : which obliges us, to borrow no more,

more, than we have a fair prospect of repaying; unless he, who credits us, knows our inability, and is willing to run the hazard of the loss. *Not intending to pay.* Whoever engages himself in debt, beyond what he can reasonably hope to repay; takes that from his creditor, upon promise of payment, which (he knows) he is never likely to restore him: which is, at least, as high an injustice, as, if he had taken it by force, or on the high-way. What then shall we say of those, who refuse and deny it; or take indirect courses, either to abate, or avoid, the payment of their lawful debts? This is, not only to deprive a creditor of the present use and possession of his money, but of his property too.

The same is to be said, of borrowing upon false or insufficient securities; such, as bad mortgages, counterfeit pawns, or insolvent bondsmen: *Borrowing, on bad securities.* he, who takes up his neighbour's goods or money, upon such securities, as he knows are incapable of repaying him; doth as manifestly wrong him, as if he had taken them by stealth or violence. Wherefore (as our debts are our creditors right) if we would be just debtors, we must neither reckon, what we owe, to be our own; nor so dispose of it, as to put it out of our power, to restore it to the true proprietors: for, by so doing, we rob and injure our creditor. Neither ought they to be less careful, to repay it upon due demand, or according to contract: because, as it is unjust, to deprive a creditor of his money; so is it unjust, to deprive him of the use and possession of it, any longer than he consents and agrees to it: *Of putting off payments when due.* wherefore, such debtors, as put off their payments without their creditors consent, when it is in their power to discharge them; or put them upon fruitless attendances, and make advantages of their money against their consent, and beyond their contracts and agreements; fall into a degree of injustice, next to that of robbing and despoiling them of it: consequently, by an indispensable rule of justice, every debtor is obliged, rather to strip himself of all, and cast himself on the providence of God; than, by denying his debts, or indi-

rectly shifting the payment of them, to feather his nest with the spoil of his neighbour's property.

When therefore, by refusing to pay what we owe, we force our creditors upon costly or troublesome suits, to recover their own; or by pleading protections, or sheltering ourselves in a prison, avoid being forced to it by law; or by fraudulent breakings, necessitate them to compound our debts, and accept a part for the whole: whichsoever of these ways we take, to deprive our creditors of their rights, we are inexcusably dishonest. It may be; that, by these or such-like knavish evasions, we may force them to acquit and discharge us: yet we cannot force God, in whose book of accounts our debts are recorded, as well as in theirs. It greatly concerns us therefore, to consider; that nothing can cancel them there, but a full restitution; and that, if they be not cancelled there, all the tricks and evasions in the world will never be able to secure us from a dismal reckoning, and a more dismal execution, at the bar of divine justice.

The same justice, which obliges men, to what has been already said, concerning debts of their own contracting; calls upon every one, to discharge those debts also, which (either through friendship for the debtor, or on any other account) they have made their own, by being bound for another, who is either incapable, or unjust enough to refuse payment. It is true, the case is hard with the bondsman; to pay, for what (as we commonly say) he has neither eaten nor drank; and, in all likelihood, to the detriment of his family; and perhaps bring himself to the very brink of poverty: but (suppose the worst) he cannot blame the creditor for these consequences; whose right to his money cannot be superseded, by any act the debtor can do, or any thing the bondsman can suffer; until the value received be duly and honestly restored, So that such misfortunes are severe cautions for us, never to enter into such engagements rashly, or without good grounds of security to ourselves; but give no countenance to us, for breaking them, on which the creditor placed his chiefest confidence: he must therefore either be paid by that means, or he is cheated and betrayed.

Of all debts, those of a man's own voluntary promise admit of the least excuse, for non-payment, or wilful with-holding of them. Does not David, in his description of a just man, command us, as it were, to pay those promised debts, though they have been made to our own disadvantage? And, as they include the wages of servants, and the hire of the labourer; so, whoever delays to discharge them, must remember the express command of God: 'Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant, that is poor and needy; whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.'

*Not paying
what we
promise.*

Likewise, where any of these offences are committed in breach of trust; which is the case of servants, and any others, who are entrusted with other men's affairs: howsoever the law may, in such cases, alleviate the punishment; yet in conscience this is an aggravation and increase of the guilt, as being a breach both of justice and fidelity. Neither is it any diminution of the crime, that the public is wronged by any unjust act: for though, in this case, it be not so obviously and immediately apparent, upon whom the injury falls, as in the case of private wrongs; yet the uncertainty, or the number of the persons, among whom the damage may chance to be divided, alters not at all the nature of the crime itself. Though injuries of this kind, in smaller instances, be not (perhaps) immediately felt and complained of: yet, when the public comes to be wronged, by persons of large and extensive power; then, not only the crime itself, but the effects of it also, become greater and more apparent, than in the case of private injustice.

*Breach of
trust.*

VIII. When a man takes from another, what is already in his possession, then Theft is called Stealing: under which head we properly reduce those most notorious rogues, who rob upon the high-way; and those, who forcibly break into houses, and carry off their neighbours goods

*Stealing the
goods of our
neighbour.*

or chattles; as also those little pilfering thieves, whose fingers cleave to every little thing they see in private: against both whom, the law of the land has enacted the punishment of death; which few ever escape, who make a constant practice of this injustice; and nothing, but timely and sincere repentance, can secure them from the eternal punishment of God's justice. How dear is the price of their iniquity? They not only venture their neck, but barter their soul likewise, for every little trifle they steal from another; or which they buy, or receive, knowing it to be stolen: which many, who seem to abhor stealing, are guilty of, in buying such things a little cheaper, than at common price. We must not conceal our neighbour's goods: for, if we find a thing, and know its right owner, and keep it for our own use; we cheat him, and thereby are guilty of theft. The only caution, needful to be given here, is; that young persons especially take heed, of the beginning of this sin; of being tempted to do wrong in smaller matters, in things, which at first may seem to be of no great consequence, not very highly injurious to the person wronged, nor very shocking to the conscience of him, who does the injustice. But this is, of all others, the greatest and most dangerous temptation: few sinners begin with the very highest of crimes; usually, being seduced at first into smaller transgressions, they become hardened by degrees, until at length they run into the greatest and most capital offences.

SUNDAY XI.

- I. *Of Deceit in trust.* II. *Of Fraud in trade, and of the rules in traffick and bargaining; of extortion, oppression, unjust weights and measures, and bad money; and of the advantage of fair dealing.* III. *Of ill-gotten goods, disquiet of conscience, and the necessity of restitution.* IV. *Of our neighbour's credit, or good name; of false reports, speaking ill of the dead, censoriousness, false witness, public slanders, whisperings; and of despising and scoffing at infirmities, calamities, and sins: of Tale-bearing: reasons against these vices.* V. *Of positive Justice; which requires*

quires truth, and condemns flattery, lying, equivocation, envy, and detraction. VI *Of the Respect, due to men of extraordinary gifts, rank, quality, and wealth; and to the poor.* VII. *Of Gratitude.*

I. **N**EXT to Stealing, follows the sin and injustice of DECEIT; which should be considered under the heads of *trust* and *traffick*.

Breach of trust includes defrauding and promise-breaking, and is a great sin. He, who trusts another, doth thereby unite him with a particular bond of society to himself, upon a promise of being served so far, as he trusts him: so that, if I accept the trust, of being an arbitrator in a cause, or an executor of a will, or a guardian to children, a factor, or assignee, or a keeper of any pledge; I am admitted, as a partner and a representative, in such matters; and my honour stands engaged, for my fidelity in the trust. Wherefore, if I suffer any man's affairs to miscarry through my neglect, I am dishonest and injurious to him; because I undertook to do for him, all I can suppose he would have done for himself, had he been master of my skill and capacity. If, for a bribe, I betray the trust a man committed to me, or convert it to my own advantage; I rob him more infamously than if with open violence I demanded his purse: because I then make use of that trust, to betray his interest; by which I was as much obliged to secure and defend it, as if I had exchanged persons, and his interest were my own; so that, to betray his interest for my own advantage, when he had made me next his own person in power, is a disingenuous perfidy and injustice: which should always be a caution to those who have the king's commission, and to all public and parish officers, as well as to stewards and servants, faithfully to discharge their respective trusts. But in every of these frauds, where God or the poor are immediately concerned, (as in all estates for, and legacies left in trust to, pious and charitable uses) the theft or breach of trust becomes Sacrilege; the malignity of which crime is particularly condemned, by the sentence of the Wise-man; who says, that it is a sin to devour that which is holy.

II. The

II. The *second* sort of Fraud is in matters of *Traffick* and *Bargaining*, when either the buyer or seller receives any damage or loss. *Bargains in Traffick.* in buying and selling, are a voluntary exchange of interests; it is our duty therefore, to deal honestly, in making the engagements, and faithfully to discharge them. Deliberate or contrived fraud is, in itself, a crime of the deepest malignity, and of the most pernicious consequence; a sin, which tends to destroy all human society, all trust and confidence among men, all justice and equity; which is the support of the world, and without which no society of men can subsist: and the breaking through this obligation by deliberate fraud is, of all other sins, one of the most open defiances of conscience, and the most wilful opposition to right reason, that can be imagined. For a Christian then; a man, who professes a pure and holy religion; a religion, which commands, not only common justice and equity, but singular love and good-will towards our neighbour; for such a man to be guilty of a contrived and deliberate fraud (which the conscience even of a good heathen would abhor) is a greater aggravation of the crime. The end of buying and selling is, to furnish one another with the necessities and conveniencies of life; both buyer and seller therefore hath a right proper to them, so to buy and sell, as that the buyer may have the worth of his price, and the seller the worth of his commodity: for, otherwise, instead of mutually assisting, we must necessarily oppress each other.

Though it be a difficult manner, to determine nicely, what the exact measure is, which ought to be observed between man and man, in buying and selling: yet in all cases, when any opportunity of dealing presents itself, we need but ask ourselves, How we would be dealt by in the same circumstances? Our answer, to that question, is our duty to those we deal with. I know, how I should expect to be used, had my neighbour and I changed persons and circumstances: my heart tells me, that I should think it reasonable, to expect such measures from him; and therefore he hath reason, to expect the same from me: when I ask myself, how I would be dealt by; those very passions,

sions, which incline me to wrong others, will instruct me to do them justice. No rule in the world can be pressed with fewer incumbrances, or darkened with less intricacy, than this; none can lie open to larger use, or be readier to present application, or more obvious to all capacities: how then can men pretend to excuse themselves, when their duty lies so plainly before them; or neglect to do their duty, when they may so clearly understand it?

Plainness and simplicity are best, in all dealings. Endeavour not, by disparaging another man's commodity, or overvaluing your own, to draw on an advantageous bargain; neither ask far beyond, nor bid much below, what reason must inform you to be the real worth: say not, you cannot take less, nor give more; when you know, you may, with sufficient profit to yourself. Make no false pretences, nor cover what is true: but so far, as in you lies, fit your affirmations and denials, to the understanding of the person you deal with; and lie not in ambush behind your words, to trap and ensnare the person with whom you transact: for, not only that, which is false; but that, which deceives; is base and unjust, in bargains.

*We should
not conceal
the faults of
our goods.*

Impose not on any man's unskilfulness or ignorance. So long as you keep, within the latitude of lawful gain; you may use your skill against another man, in driving a bargain. In an ordinary plenty of commodities, there is an ordinary price; which those, who deal therein, know and understand: and, when the contractors equally understand the price, there can be no deception or injustice in the contract, be it made ever so hard. On the contrary, if he, with whom I contract, be ignorant or unskilful; I should not rate his want of understanding, or set a tax upon his ignorance; but use him as one, who reposes a trust in me, and casts himself upon my equity; else I shall be guilty of injustice.

*Nor use ex-
tortion.*

The same may be said of him, who takes advantage of another's necessities. When a poor man is by his wants, forced to sell his wares, to supply his necessities; give him the price

*Nor use
oppression.*

you

you would have given, if he wanted your money no more, than you need his goods. On the other side; if the poor man be forced to buy upon trust, encrease your price no higher, than what makes you recompence for the loss; which, by the rules of trade, you sustain by the credit you give him: for he, who takes advantage of another's necessities, adds oppression to misery; which is not only injustice, but cruelty. Neither take any thing from the commodity or price, for which you have bargained.

Nor unjust weights and measures. He, who buys a commodity by weight and measure, hath a right to as much, as the common standard allows him; and to take any thing from the bargain, by false weights or measures, or adulteration, or by falsly weighing or measuring, is no less, than theft. He also who sells a commodity, hath right to the money, for which he sells it: if the buyer therefore knowingly pay him uncurrent coin, or forcibly detain from him any part of the price; he also manifestly violates the indispensable rules of justice.

Of engrossing, and raising the price; and of stolen goods. Moreover, be not guilty of engrossing, or buying all of a commodity into your own hands, with the sole view of selling it the dearer, and thereby to oppress or distress the publick. Neither let the people curse thee, for being the first in raising the price of goods. Deal not in stolen goods, knowing or suspecting them to be such; for thereby thou becomest as

bad as the thief. Neither let it be laid to thy charge, that thou hast taken any advantage of the mistake or oversight of the seller: for, whoever takes more, than he bought, or gives any thing less than he has bargained for, is guilty of theft. And

Overfight of the seller. finally, never justify your deceit, when you are detected in a fraud, by adding lies to your unfair dealing: for, a good and a quiet conscience is to be valued, above the greatest gain; and that man hath but little regard of his conscience, who will venture to expose it, to get a shilling more in a bargain.

Deceit. The usual bait of injustice is gain and profit: this is the common mark, fraud and oppression aim at; though usually.

usually they fly short or beyond it, and, instead of enriching, do finally damage and impoverish men. It is indeed known, that unjust dealing may sometimes raise a man's fortune; but it is as well known, that in its natural tendency it impairs and ruins it; because, by dealing unjustly, he makes it every man's interest to forsake him, and sets a cross upon his own door to warn all customers against entering therein. Is it reasonable to suppose, that any one would knowingly have to do with a knave, who always lies upon the catch to cozen him; with whom he can neither speak nor act securely, but must be forced to stand upon his guard continually? How can a man thrive; when no body cares to deal with him; when his house is haunted, and his frauds and cozenages appear like sprites at his door, to frighten all men from his shop?

*These are
not the ways
to be rich.*

Justice in dealing is so necessary, to men's thriving in the world; that even they, who are not honest, endeavour to seem so: but, the best way to seem honest, is really to be so. No man can be secure of privacy, in an unjust action; let him carry it ever so demurely, one accident or other will draw the curtain, and bring to light the fraud and villainy behind it: so that, how much soever a man may gain, by a present cheat; he is sure, if he be discovered, to be a loser at the last. Injustice is as great an error in politicks, as in morals; and shews a man to have as little wit, as honesty. The sum therefore is briefly this: he, who acts sincerely and justly in the whole course of his life, with a continual respect to the reason of things and the law of God; who carries on all his undertakings by fair and equitable means, avoiding all frauds and deceits, all base and unworthy practices; this man takes the wisest and surest course, to succeed in all his designs, respecting either his present or his future happiness.

The advantage of fair dealing.

III. Though a man thrive by his fraud and injustice here; (alas!) what comfort can he take in his ill-gotten wealth; when every part of it awakens some sad reflection in his conscience! Yet this is the case, when all a man enjoys, when the very meat he gorges, the

*Ill-gotten
goods give
continual
disquiet.*

drink

drink he guzzles, and the clothes he flaunts in, shall thus reproach and upbraid him: 'O wretched man! we are the price of thy innocence, and thy eternal happiness: for us thou hast freely consigned thy immortal spirit to everlasting confusion!' When his bags and coffers cry, Guilty! guilty! and every thing he enjoys, whispers some accusation against him; what comfort can he take, in the purchase of his frauds, oppressions, and cruelties? Yet this is commonly the fate of unjust possessors, who, under the disguise of a chearful countenance, too commonly wear a woeful heart. The avenging principle within us will certainly do its duty, upon any eminent breach of ours; and make every flagrant act of wickedness, even in this life, a punishment to itself.

*Remorse,
the present
punishment
of Sin.*

Moral evil can no more be committed, than natural evil can be suffered, without anguish and disquiet: whatever doth violence to the plain dictates of our reason concerning virtue and vice, duty and sin, will as certainly discompose and afflict our thoughts, as a wound will raise a smart in the flesh. Good and evil, whether natural or moral, are but other words for pleasure and pain, delight and uneasiness. There is no need of arguments, to evince this truth; the universal experience and feeling of mankind bears witness to it. Did ever any man break the power of a darling lust, resist a pressing temptation, or perform any act of a conspicuous and distinguishing virtue; who has not found it soon turn to account to him? Does not the mind swell with a secret satisfaction, at the moment of doing it? And is not the reflecting on it afterwards, always sweet and refreshing; health to your navel, and marrow to your bones? On the contrary, did you ever indulge a criminal appetite, or allow yourself sedately in any practice, which you knew to be unlawful; without feeling an inward struggle, and strong reluctances of mind before the attempt, and bitter pangs of remorse, attending it? Though no eye saw what you did, and you were sure no mortal could discover it; did not shame and confusion secretly lay hold of you? Was not your own conscience, instead of a thousand witnesses to you?

Injustice

Injustice being a damnable sin, it necessarily follows : that, when a man deals unjustly by another, he must either resolve to undo his own act, or to run the hazard of being undone for ever ; the former of which is a ridiculous vanity, and the latter a desperate madness. What a vanity is it for a man, to do what he resolves to undo, to slander with a purpose to vindicate, and cheat with a resolution to refund ; that is, to do any evil thing, with a purpose to be never the better for so doing ? Since therefore, every wilful act of injustice binds men over to eternal punishment, and nothing but Restitution can release from that sad obligation ; it follows, that he, who deals unjustly by others, without an intent to make restitution, doth by his own act wilfully oblige himself, to endure eternal torments, and the loss of heaven : and for the same reason, that justice and equity is necessary to be practised at all ; it is fit, that (whenever any failure has been made, in the practice of these duties) restitution be made to the persons who have been wronged. Repentance necessarily supposes a desire, that the offence had never been committed ; and the only possible evidence, of the sincerity of that desire, is the making of restitution, wherever it can be done in reality and with effect.

*The fatal
Consequences
of Sin,
hereafter.*

Before we can hope for pardon then, we must resolve on Restitution : it is a part of justice, to which a man is obliged by some former contract, or a foregoing fault, by his own or another man's act, either with or without his will.

*The necessity
of Restitu-
tion.*

The borrower is bound to pay ; much more he, who steals or defrauds. In the case of stealing, there is an injury done to our neighbour, and the evil still remains after the action is past : for this we are therefore accountable to our neighbour ; and are bound to take the evil off from him, which we brought upon him ; else he is an injured person, and a sufferer all the while. That any man should be the worse for me, by my act, and by my intention, is against the rule of equity, of justice, and of charity : I do not that to others, which I would have done to myself ; if I grow rich, upon the ruins of my neighbour. So that, if the wrong I do to another man be such as is reparable, I must resolve to repair it,

or to perish eternally. He, who doth not repair an injury, when he is able, doth every moment continue and repeat it: and, though the first act were transient, and died in the commission; yet, if it leave a continual evil behind it, upon the good name or estate of my neighbour; I am as much obliged (if I be able) to remove the evil from him, as I was, not to bring it upon him; and while I neglect to remove it, I wilfully continue the evil upon him, and so continue to do him harm. When I rob or defraud a man of his estate, or any part of it, the sin doth not cease with the act of stealth, or cozenage, or violence, which ends or expires in the commission; but continues so long, as the damage or evil effect of it remains: whilst he suffers in his estate by my act, and it is in my power to repair it, I continue injuring him. Wherefore, our sin can never be pardoned, until we have restored, what we unjustly took, or wrongfully detained: which we must really perform, when we are able. Which doctrine, besides its evident and apparent reasonableness, is derived from the express words of scripture, reckoning Restitution as a part of repentance, necessary to the remission of our sins: If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, &c. he shall surely live, he shall not die.

The practice of this part of justice is to be directed, by these rules following: That person, who is a real cause of wrong to his neighbour, whether by commending or encouraging it, by counselling or commanding it, by acting it, or not hindering it when he might or ought; or by concealing it, or receiving it: *Methods of restitution.* is bound to make restitution to his neighbour; if the injury, done by him or his assistance, had not been done without him: for, his neighbour is made worse by him; and should be restored to that state, from which he was forced. That person, who intends a small injury to his neighbour, and acts it, and by it a greater evil accidentally comes, is obliged to make an entire reparation, not only of the injury he intended, but also of that he intended not; because his original mischief was the cause thereof. Whoever hinders a charitable person from giving alms to a poor man, is tied to restitution, if he hindered him by fraud or violence. Whosoever

ever refuses to do any part of his duty (to which he is otherwise obliged) without a bribe, is bound to restore that money, which he has unjustly taken. Such, as by fact, or word, or sign, either fraudulently or violently, does hurt to a neighbour's body, life, goods, good name, friends, or soul; is bound, as far as is possible to be done, to make restitution in the several instances. The adulterous person is tied to make provision, for the children begotten in unlawful embraces; that they may do no injury to the legitimate, by receiving a common portion: and, if the injured person demand money, he must satisfy him with money. The murderer is bound to restitution, by allowing such a maintenance to the children or near relations of the deceased, as they have lost by his death; considering, and allowing for, all circumstances of the man's age and health. The slanderer and back-biter, who hath really lessened the fame of his neighbour by fraud or violence, is bound to restore it by a confession of his fault; giving testimony of his innocence or worth, doing him honour, or (if that will not do, and both parties agree) by money. Whoever hath wounded his neighbour, is tied to the expences of the surgeon and other incidents; and to repair, whatever losses he sustains by his disability to work or trade: the duty is the same, in the case of false imprisonment; in which and all other cases, the injured person is to be restored (so far, as we are able) to that perfect and good condition, from which he had been removed by fraud or violence. A ravisher must repair the temporal detriment or injury, done to the maid; and give her a dowry, or marry her, if she desire it: because this restores her (as far, as it can be done) into that capacity, of being a good wife, which she lost by the injury. Such, as rob a neighbour of his goods, or detain any thing violently or fraudulently, are bound to restore, not only the principal, but all its fruits and profits, which would have accrued to the right owner during the time they detain them. The sacrilegious, the detainers of tithes, cheaters of men's inheritances, unjust judges, false witnesses and accusers; those, who do fraudulently or violently bring men to sin, who force men to drink, who laugh at and disgrace virtue, who persuade servants to run away

away or suddenly quit their places, or commend such purposes; violent persecutors of religion in any instance, and all of the same nature, are all in justice obliged, to make restitution. He, who hath wronged so many, or in such a manner (as in the way of daily trade) that he knows not, in what measure he hath done it, or who they are; must redeem his fault by alms and largesses to the poor, according to the value of his wrongful dealing, as near as he can judge. Whosoever has contracted debts, must discharge them, as soon as he can; for, as we read, that Jesus Christ pronounced salvation to the house of Zaccheus, in the same day, that he had made restitution; so, if we do likewise, we have the same hope, that he will grant us his salvation.

IV. The fourth branch of *negative Justice* concerns the CREDIT of our neighbour. Every member of human society has a right to credit and a fair character, among his neighbours and acquaintance, if deserving of it; for, who will trust a man of a lost reputation; or who would willingly have any society with a man, in whom he cannot confide? There is therefore nothing generally more dear and valuable to men, than their reputation or good name; which is rather to be chosen than riches, and (as a precious ointment) perfumes wherever it spreads. The wisest and best men have therefore been always very tender, of preserving it in themselves; and good christians ought to make great conscience, of taking it wrongfully from others: for a man's ability to do good to himself, or to his friends and neighbours; the success of his affairs, the comforts and interests and most of the conveniences of life, yea and sometimes life itself; depend upon the credit he has obtained among his neighbours: whoever therefore is guilty of defaming his neighbour, does in effect the same thing, as to defraud him of his property; for so much reputation is always so much power.

A man's Credit is impaired and injured by *false reports*: under which head I include the spreading false reports knowingly and maliciously, concerning any person, either for some private advantage to ourselves, or out of envy towards him, or in any way of revenge for some conceived affront: nay, whatever

whatever be the cause ; this is a sin of the deepest dye, condemned amongst the most detestable crimes ; and it is declared in scripture, that all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Our Saviour, when the Pharisees spread false accusations against him, told them, they imitated their father the devil ; who, when he speaketh a lie, speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it. There are still lower degrees of this vice ; which, as they are less scandalous, there is more danger of men's falling into : such are, the carelessly spreading of accusations, when we do not certainly know, whether they be true or false ; also calumny, detraction, slander, evil-speaking, backbiting, tale-bearing, rash judgment, and the like. Among things inconsistent with the profession of a christian, the Apostle always reckons maliciousness, debate, malignity, whisperings, back-bitings, wrath, strife, hatred, variance, emulations, envyings, railings, evil-surmisings, bitterness, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking : and declares, that, if any man seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart ; this man's religion is vain. Our Saviour likewise admonishes us, to beware of it : ' Judge not, (says he) that ye be not judged.'

If it be asked, whether it be lawful to speak ill of the dead ; the answer is, that it either must be lawful in some cases, and under proper restrictions ; or we must condemn all historians (the sacred not excepted) who have transmitted the faults, as well as virtues of the dead, to posterity. There is a tenderness due to the memory of those, who are no longer in a capacity to speak for themselves : and therefore we ought to be very careful, not to charge any crimes upon them. of which we have not strong authentic proofs, either from personal knowledge, or from persons of unsuspected veracity. Where there is even a faint probability, that the fact, of which they are accused, might be otherwise than it is represented ; there we ought to be silent : but, where the facts are so notorious, as to admit of no doubt ; so flagrantly bad, as to need no aggravation ; there we ought to consider, there is a curse denounced upon the wicked, that their memories should
not;

*Of speaking
ill of the
dead.*

not; as there is a promise to the righteous, that they should be had in everlasting remembrance, and their memories be embalmed. It is wrong likewise, to speak evil of the dead, for the sake of evil-speaking, without a view to the information of the living.

Under this head also we must include the careless and rash custom, of spreading censorious and uncharitable reports, to the disadvantage of our neighbour, without knowing at all, whether there be any truth in the accusation, or any just ground and foundation for the censure; this is the mother of innumerable sorts of calumny, detraction, slander, evil-speaking, back-biting, tale bearing, rash-judgment; publishing any thing of a neighbour, which is really true, but needless, and contrary to the laws of charity: declaring a neighbour's real infirmities or faults, to his disadvantage, without serving the purpose of any true benefit either to him or others: this is against the express command, 'Thou shalt not go up and down, as a tale-bearer, among thy people.' The Apostle ranks back-biting, with the black crimes of those, who are given up to a reprobate mind, and in the judgment of God are worthy of death; and he puts slanderers and revilers with those, who shall not inherit the kingdom of God: and, when he reckons up the sins of the last times, evil-speakers are in the list of that black catalogue. St. Peter joins evil-speakings with malice, hypocrisy, and envy, offsprings of hell: and, notwithstanding the highest pretences to religion, St. James assures us, he, who bridles not his tongue, that man's religion is vain: in that, it is contrary to that wise dictate of nature, of doing to others as we would they should do to us; it is an open violation of that christian doctrine of charity, and is a sign of a weak mind, which is not able to bear the lustre of merit and virtue.

Here I cannot but observe, with too much truth, that those, who know a great deal of ill of themselves, are apt to suspect ill of every body else. 'Thou thoughtest wickedly, that I was such an one as thyself,' is the character the Psalmist gives of an immoral person. They accuse people of wickedness, which they do not know

Censure intolerable, from the guilty.

know to be true ; and censure them, for what they cannot know to be true ; viz. their intentions, and the thoughts of their hearts : their talk is a constant satire upon others, and their actions a living satire upon themselves : their foul language is nothing, but the overflowings of a much fouler heart. It is the mark of a mean and cruel temper, unworthy of a man, to delight in wounding our neighbour ; or to widen those wounds, which have been made by others. If we have any talent, for saying keen and satirical things ; let us be superior to the talent we possess, by shewing how little stress we lay upon it, when it comes in competition with our good-nature : let us have no recourse to low stratagems, at once to cover, and yet discharge our little spite : for, whatever pleasure we may feel, in giving utterance to ill-natured suggestions ; there is a much greater, in stifling them. This vice frequently puts on the appearance of friendship, and is ushered in with great commendations ; that the wound may be deep and sure. Nevertheless, whatever false reasons may be given for this practice ; it is always a breach of the great duty of charity, and is a mark of false devotion ; to tear in pieces the reputation of those, who oppose our designs : and to think, of making an agreeable offering to God, of what we sacrifice, either to our interest, revenge, or to our jealous tempers : for, except some instance of justice or charity require it, we ought not to expose our neighbour's real faults ; because we are not willing, that all, that is true of ourselves, should be exposed to public view. What commendations then does he not deserve ; who (at the same time, that he has too much good sense, to think well of the worthless) has too much charity, to speak ill of any, when there is no necessity for it ? The love we owe our neighbour, should make us ready to cover and conceal all things, which are defective in him, and which (if known) may tend to lessen that good name and reputation he hath obtained. When a man's vices only hurt himself, and terminate in his own person, we have no right to publish them : because we can answer no good end thereby : but, when his vices affect, or may affect others ; it is our duty to warn as many, as we can consistently with our own safety. Only, let us take this caution along with
us :

us: before we endeavour to undeceive others, let us be sure we are not deceived ourselves.

When things are doubtful, always incline to the favourable side. If you should be mistaken on the charitable side, God will overlook your mistake, and accept your charity. Endeavour, by all prudent means, to divert censorious discourse, and discourage such an uncharitable sort of conversation; and urge, what you can, in your neighbour's vindication: but, if the matter be too evident to be denied, endeavour to diminish the guilt of it, by imputing it to ignorance or surprize, or to the strength of temptation; and by owning, the best people might have found difficulties, in such dangerous circumstances and temptations. We must not shew any pleasure or satisfaction, in what is related to our neighbour's prejudice; lest we encourage the detractor, and become partakers with him in his sin. But nothing is more necessary, for the mastery of this reigning sin, than a firm resolution, never to speak the least ill of any one: for, whosoever gives himself the liberty, of publishing the evil he knows of another; and talks with pleasure of such faults, though known by every body; he may be likely to fall into real detractions. Where the power and corruption of nature is strong, it is difficult to stop; besides, by indulging small neglects, we fortify our evil inclinations, and by degrees contract a habit of defamation, and exchange the amiable quality of sincerity for deceit and falshood. I know not what pleasure men of this stamp may take, in supposing themselves to stand clear of those vices, which they charge upon others. But this I dare venture to say, that the same meanness and littleness of soul (which makes them, so inquisitive to know, so glad to hear, and so industrious to spread, any fault of others) would make them commit the very same, if they had the same temptations and complexion: for, the source of vice is the meanness and baseness of a depraved soul. To this class of ill natured persons, must be reduced, those, who (as they express it) love to speak their minds upon all occasions; privileged talkers, affronting those above them, insulting those beneath them, and displeasing every

every body : but, if they would always speak freely, what they think ; they should first take care, to think justly, as they ought ; tenderly of others, humbly and soberly of themselves.

This should also be well considered by those, who make no scruple of bearing false Witness against their neighbour, in a court of justice ; *Of bearing false wit-
ness.* or where-ever his person, property, or reputation may be thereby injured : such is the unrighteous witness, who sells himself, to work evil in the sight of the Lord ; whose crime encreaseth, in proportion to the evil, thereby done to his neighbour, and therefore was forbidden by God himself : and the offender therein is adjudged, to suffer the same punishment, as by false witness and perjury he would have brought upon his neighbour. If we be called, to give public testimony between man and man ; a sincere respect to truth should engage us to a careful recollection, before we give our testimony : it should dispose us, to lay aside affection on one hand, and prejudice on the other ; and impartially to speak the whole truth, without disguise or concealment. Though we be not bound, in every case, to speak the whole truth : yet when a matter depends (in whole, or in part) upon our evidence, we are bound, not only to avoid all falshood ; but also, not to omit any thing, which may give light to the true merits of the cause : for such concealments have the nature of a lye ; and partial evidences may have the same evil effects, as those, which are directly false. We are not obliged, to bear no witness at all, against our neighbour ; we are only, to bear no false witness. This rule extends, to the giving of testimonials and characters of servants, or of candidates for any employment : to give them no character at all, is (to all intents and purposes) the same, as to give them a bad one ; and to give them a good character upon the whole, when they do not deserve it, is to be easy and good-natured at the expence of truth and justice.

Some, who scruple to bear false witness, where they think their neighbour directly concerned in *Of public
Slanders.* his life, property, reputation, or otherwise ; yet make light of violating truth in common conversation ; and too frequently aggravate their slanders,

ders, with invidious railings and bitter reproaches. But this, no less than the preceding injury of false witness, is not only threatened with the loss of heaven hereafter; but disqualifies them also, for the communion of Christ's church here upon earth. It would be well, in those, who are guilty of such evil devices; to remember, that, if we hastily put an uncertain story out of our power, by making it public; we may prove false witnesses of a scandal, to many, who take it upon our authority, without having inclination or opportunity, to examine the grounds on which we told it.

Whisper-
ing. We should also guard against that too common sin of whispering, or spreading a report, to the disadvantage of our neighbour, under a pretence of enjoining secrecy. This caution we observe, not in regard to our neighbour, but to prevent our being discovered to be the authors of it: but, by this working in the dark, the slander (like a secret poison) becomes incurable, before the injured person can discern it; and may therefore be justly accounted one of the most incurable wounds of the tongue; undermining all society, and too frequently robbing families of their peace, and innocent persons of their good name: it separateth chief friends; and therefore the tongue, which is given to this wicked practice, may be properly said to be set on fire of hell.

SUNDAY XI. PART. II.

The severe steps towards Slander. As it is said, that, were there no receivers, there would be no thieves; so, did not men encourage tale-bearing and whispering, there would be no slanderers. Though we do not prompt them, to this wickedness; yet, if we be ready to credit slanderous reports, we encourage the wicked person, whose intention is the ruin of his neighbour's character; and, as his accusation is no just ground of belief in us, so are we guilty of injustice to our neighbour, if we believe the evil reported: but, if we not only believe, but even scruple not to become a party in the slander, by publishing it, and (perhaps) with some addition, as a story that has been told

us;

us; we also incur the guilt, and are liable to the punishment, of the whisperer.

From the very nature and constitution of human society, there arises originally, in the reason of things, a strong argument, why men ought to govern their words, as well as their actions. Human society is preserved, by the mutual intercourse of both: but by injurious speech, as well as by unjust actions, are destroyed that general *Reasons a-* trust and confidence, that mutual charity and good-will, *gainst this* on which depend the welfare and happiness of mankind. The constitution of every human society bears some resemblance, to the frame of the natural body: and as, in the natural body, all division, disagreement, and disunion of the members necessarily tends, to the destruction and dissolution of the whole; so in proportion, in all communities and societies of men whatsoever, the contentions and animosities, the disorders and distractions, arising from slander, calumny, detraction, uncharitableness, and other instances of licentious speech, are inevitably of very pernicious effect: nay, it is often of dangerous consequence to the person, who indulgeth himself in this folly.

The wise authors of the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus express themselves clearly on this head. ‘ The ear of jealousy heareth all things, and the noise of whisperings is not hid: therefore *Authori-* refrain your tongue from backbiting; for *ties from* there is no word so secret, that shall go for *Scripture.* nought; and the mouth that belyeth, slayeth the soul. He, that can rule his tongue, shall live without strife; and he, that hateth babbling, shall have less evil. Re- hearse not unto another, that which is told unto thee, and thou shalt fare never the worse. Whether it be to a friend or a foe, talk not of other men’s lives; and, if thou canst without offence, reveal them not: for he heard and observed thee; and, when time cometh, he will hate thee. If thou hast heard a word, let it die with thee; and behold, it will not burst thee.’ The natural punishment therefore, of a licentious and unbridled tongue, is the inconvenience it is (in the course of things) very apt to bring upon the persons themselves:

but the sinfulness of it principally appears, in the damage it secretly does to others. Slander and uncharitable defamation is a pestilence, which walketh in darkness; a secret stab, against which there is many times no possibility of defence.

Another and a more powerful motive, to oblige men to restrain licentious speech, is the consideration of the inconsistency of it with a due sense of religion. St. Paul with great severity reproves such persons, as wander about from house to house, being tatlers and busy-bodies; speaking things, which they ought not. A farther reason against calumny and detraction, is the consideration of ourselves being, all of us, subject to error. I speak not here, of the ill character; which is, and ought to be given, of all open vice and manifest unrighteousness. But men, who have different notions and apprehensions of things, are very apt to cast reproach upon each other; not for their vices, but for their different understandings: the same frailty, which, in a man of the same sect or party, is not reckoned a blemish at all; is held a most unpardonable crime, in a person of a different party. A greater and still more inexcusable degree of this partiality is, when men cast reproach and contempt upon others, for what is truly commendable; for doing, what (perhaps) was their duty; for being wiser, or more charitable, or more scrupulous and conscientious, than themselves. Our Saviour forbids this censoriousness towards others, under the penalty of being more strictly judged ourselves: 'Judge not, (says he) that ye be not judged.' Concerning opprobrious and reproachful language to a man's face, he says; 'Whosoever shall say unto his brother, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' How much higher then, must be his displeasure, at malicious back-biting and uncharitable detraction; which is really more injurious, more difficult to be guarded against, and of more extensive effect, than any other way of doing wrong to our neighbour? I conclude therefore, with that declaration of our Lord; Matt. xiii. 36. 'I say unto you, that every idle word (that is, every malicious word) that men shall speak: they shall give an account thereof, in the day of judgment: for, by thy words

‘ words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.’

Let us therefore, not only avoid the more gross means of slander : but also take care, never to strike at a man’s reputation, by despising and scolding him : especially, if another be also encouraged thereby, to scorn and scoff at thy neighbour, either on account of some human infirmities, providential calamities, or even for his very sins ; for, in so doing, we do him a great injustice. Most men feel more, in the whole of their life, from the scornful reproofs of the wealthy, the despitefulness of the proud, taunting sarcasms, and little instances of ill-will, neglect and contempt, than they do from the more solid evils of life. You exasperate a man, when you scorn and make a jest of him, as thinking him not of consequence enough to be hated : for, such is the nature of men, they had rather be thought vicious, than ridiculous : they can bear to be hated for their vices ; but cannot endure to be ridiculed for their follies.

If we scoff at him for the deformity of his body, disagreeableness of his face, the folly or weakness of his understanding ; we lay that to his charge, which he cannot help : and, at the same time, impeach the wisdom and justice of God ; who thought good, to deny him those excellencies of the body and mind. The same reason forbids us, to reproach any person for those afflictions of body and mind, which are accidental to all men under the providence of God, who, for wise, just, and good reasons, correcteth the children of men, when and how he sees proper. We therefore ought not to judge, what are his motives for so doing ; but search our own hearts and repent, lest our sins may deserve the like punishment : and, instead of persecuting those, whom God hath smitten, and by our talk grieving those, whom he hath wounded ; we should consider well, how our Saviour reproves such evil practices : ‘ Suppose ye (says he, to the censorious Jews) that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things ? I tell you, nay ; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’

For infirmities.

For calamities.

In fine, whatever we ourselves are liable to, should never be the subject of our derision in another: so that the very sins of our neighbour are no just excuse, for our contempt and scoffing; but, instead of reproach, they should excite our compassion. Bear then with the faults of those about you, as you expect they should bear with yours; faults, which frail nature cannot well guard against, and which therefore good nature should overlook: be just to their merits, charitable to their failings, and tender to their misfortunes; because if we have not fallen into the same or the like faults, it is not our own strength, but God's more especial grace, which preserves us. If a person, who in the main has led a good life, should yet (contrary to the general tenor of his conduct) be guilty of some unaccountable weakness, it should teach us to be watchful and circumspect; lest we, who think we stand, should also fall. The miscarriages of a good man, which give an ill-natured pleasure to little minds, suggest to every great mind the most melancholy ideas, of the weakness of human nature in general; but no spiteful and venomous reflections, against his weakness in particular. He therefore, who would insinuate any thing from such

*Destroying
the credit,
a great
and irrepara-
ble inju-
ry.*

cases, to his neighbour's disadvantage; is guilty of a great injustice to his credit; and robs him of what is most valuable in this life, and for which (it may be) he can never make a sufficient restitution. Where shall we go, to recal our invidious speeches? Or, how is it possible to suppose, that all, who have heard our slanders before, shall either hear, or be willing to believe, our public recantations? And, if we be not sure of that, it is certain, we can have no assurance, of having repaired the injury done to our neighbour's reputation. But, by all the laws of God and man, we are obliged to do all in our power, to restore that good name we have blasted: else we cannot hope for pardon, from God; whose eyes are open to, and will punish every wicked thought, as well as deeds and words.

*Men must
endeavour
to repair
the injury.*

To conclude this point of Negative Justice ; let me exhort you, not so much as to wish, or think, evil of your neighbour : for the same law which forbids us to hurt, commands us to love ; and not to hate, envy, or wish any evil, even to our enemies : so that, though we bridle our tongue, and lend no hand, to any violent oppression of our neighbour ; we stand guilty before God, for every malicious desire, or if we take pleasure at his misfortunes. ‘ Keep thy heart (says Solomon) with all diligence ; for, out of it, are the issues of life :’ because none, but the pure in heart shall see God.

*Of Justice
in the
Thoughts.*

V. Having largely shewn, in the foregoing particulars, how a man may do an injury to his neighbour ; I shall now proceed to that, which divines call *positive* JUSTICE ; and which consists, in giving that to our neighbour, which he of right can demand of us, as his due: This branch of justice must be considered in two respects ; first, as it concerns all men in general ; and then, as it regards each, in his proper station of life.

*Of positive
Justice.*

Truth must take place, in all our promises and engagements : because, where we were at full liberty before, promises oblige us, and give our neighbour a right ; and we should never allow ourselves to make them, unless there be an intention to put them in execution. Therefore, before any man resolves, let him thoroughly consider the matter he resolves upon ; and the arguments, which may be urged for and against it ; let him consider his own temper and humour, when he doth resolve : let him make his resolutions as particular, as may be ; not only resolving upon the end, but upon the means likewise, of attaining that end : and, above all, let him be prudent in his resolutions ; and not burthen himself, with unnecessary promises or engagements. To engage to do a thing, when we cannot accomplish it, or have it not in our intention ; is really, to injure our neighbour, and to wrong our own souls at the last day. As we must be supposed to promise, what we are able to perform, and what we suppose to be lawful ; so, if it ap-

*Truth to be
spoken to all
men.*

*Promise no-
thing out
of thy
power.*

pear otherwise, we must repent of our rashness, and not add sin to sin, by executing a rash, unlawful act. Hence it is plain, that no promise can be made, in bar of all future contingencies ; nor release a man from that, which the providence of God makes much more his duty : by that it is incumbent on us, to speak as we think, to do what we pretend and profess, to perform what we promise ; and really to be, what we would seem and appear to be, to all about us. However, this no way implies, that we are obliged to tell every man our whole mind ; but, that we must never declare any thing, contrary thereto : we may conceal as much of ourselves, as prudence, or any other good reason requires : but we must not put on a disguise, nor make a false appearance, of what we are not either by word or deed.

I fear, most of that compliment, which is current in common conversation, is contrary to this
Flattery a virtue : because, for the most part, it is no-
kind of thing, but words ; used, to fill up the gaps,
Injustice. and supply the emptiness, of discourse : it is a counterfeit show of kindness and esteem, which either in truth we have not ; or not to that degree, which our expressions seem to import. This, if done with design, is what we call flattery ; a very odious sort of insincerity ; and so much the more sinful, as it abuses men into a vain and foolish opinion of themselves, and an ill-grounded confidence of the kindness and good-will of others. Civility is fit to be professed and practised to all ; but a profession of respect and esteem is another thing ; and, when there is nothing to answer it, it is inconsistent with the candor and simplicity of a disciple of Christ. Commendations, which men do not deserve, and for excellencies they do not possess, pass with us for words of course ; but they will not pass so easily, in the day of the Lord. By throwing an undistinguished glare of praise on every object, we perceive no object at all in its just and genuine light. He, who commends every one, in effect commends no one at all ; for an undistinguishing praise confounds the characters of men, as much, as an undistinguishing censure : we ought not to speak well of every body, promiscuously, and in general ; because we
 ought

ought to make a distinction, where there is a difference.

To speak, every one the truth with his neighbour, has ever been acknowledged, by men of all conditions, to be our necessary and indis-

Of lying.
pensible duty. Heathens, as well as Christians; men of all ranks and professions, of all sects and religions whatever, have agreed in this; that there is an eternal obligation, founded on the nature of things (which every man, who attends to the dictates of his reason and conscience, cannot but own and be sensible of) that our words be agreeable to our thoughts. Lying, or endeavouring to deceive, is a base and mean practice, unworthy the dignity of a rational creature, and highly displeasing to God; who has given us the use of that noble faculty of speech, to this very end, that it might be the interpreter of our thoughts to each other. A Lye is an endeavour to deceive another, in the ordinary way of communicating our thoughts; by signifying that to him as true, which we ourselves think not to be so: nor is it less a Lye, though signified only by nods and gestures. Again, if a man think a thing not to be true, and yet declare it to another as certain; though, in the event, the thing should chance to prove true: yet, since he knew it not, and believed it not to be so: his act is still the same, and may properly be called a Lye. God expresseth himself highly offended at those, who practise lying and falsehood; and proclaims a strong detestation of them: 'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.' 'Put away lying, says the Apostle: lye not one to another; but let every man speak truth with his neighbour.' We, who worship the God of truth, ought to speak truth; to use plainness and sincerity in all our words; to abhor falsehood and dissimulation, and the more refined ways of lying,

Of Equivocation.

by Equivocation of words, and secret Reservations of our minds, on purpose to deceive the innocent. In a word; that man, who can dispense with himself, as to moral duties, while he makes no conscience, of telling a lye or breaking his word; what badge soever he may wear, what title soever he may call himself by: it is as impossible, that such a man should be a true Christian;

as it is, to reconcile the God of truth and the father of lyes.

Yet, all untruths cannot be properly reduced under this sin, for it should be observed, that it is no lye to repeat a known falshood, in the way of a narrative; if a man mention it not as his own sense, but declare it to be false at the same time. If a sick person would refuse a medicine likely to be of service to him, if he was acquainted what it was; a physician, a parent, or a friend, may lawfully endeavour to deceive him by any method consistent with truth. Should a matter be entrusted to me, as a secret; which another, who has no right to know it, would fain discover: if by silence, or by a partial but true account, I can divert his enquiry, it will be no falshood. But it is not lawful, to lye for God, or for the greatest advantage to our neighbour or ourselves: for, lying in any kind is a violation of truth, which the best end cannot justify; because we must not do evil, that good may come. Therefore, though facetious lyes be not a direct breach of charity; yet they are of truth, and weaken men's regard for it; and though such inventions may produce some mirth and entertainment, for the company; yet they can give none, in the reflection, applied to ourselves; but, upon reflection, only gain us the reputation of impertinent lyars.

*Of jocose
Lyes.*

*The common-
ness
and folly
of Lying.*

Is it not strange then, that a man is scarce to be found, who speaketh truth from his heart; as if neither God, nor man were able to find him out? But, as it is a common observation; there are few lyars, who do not, at some times, discover their own folly, and thereby become the contempt and reproach of all sober and well-meaning men: and, as no arts or craftiness can hide it from God, who seeth the heart, and knoweth our thoughts long before; and as he is the God of truth, and will certainly punish it (as he has promised) with fire and brimstone: so if any one would live comfortably and creditably here, and avoid God's vengeance hereafter, he must put away lying, upon any occasion whatever.

Not

Not only truth, but Courtesy and good behaviour is due to all men, from the highest to the lowest station of life : a crabbed morose temper is more the resemblance of a brute than an indication of a rational creature. The proud and ambitious man, who looks down with a pharisaical disdain upon his fellow-creatures, and refuses common civility to other men ; should remember that the Lord maketh us all, both high and low, rich and poor ; and can humble him, who exalteth himself. There is scarce any one instance, wherein men so generally concur to execute God's providence, as in pulling down those mighty men, who had used them contemptuously, when God begins to visit them with adversity.

We must also treat our neighbour with Meekness. Be patient (says the Apostle) towards all men ; never rewarding evil for evil, or railing for railing ; no, not in our zeal for the cause of religion : because meekness of heart is a condition, without which we cannot be admitted into the presence of God. Without this virtue, there can neither be peace, good neighbourhood, love, nor affection, in any kingdom, state or family ; because an angry brawling man can neither be a good friend, nor an agreeable companion : wherefore Solomon advises us, not to make friendship with an angry man, nor to go with a furious man ; and declares, ' It is better to dwell in a wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.' Whoever rightly considers, what our Saviour says, ' that such a one is in danger of hell-fire ;' cannot easily give way to this sin, which is too often attended with horrid oaths, cursings, execrations, and blasphemies : and, as this is the language of hell, they, who use it, cannot be fit for heaven. ' Therefore let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.'

VI. Excellency in any thing or person is the gift of God, and demands its proper praise and honour : he therefore, who excels another, hath a right to be preferred before him, in the esteem and value of the world, and

*Respect,
due to men
of extraor-
dinary
Gifts.*

and to have his light reflected with more splendour, and his excellencies resounded with higher applauses. He, who, out of a conceited opinion of his own excellencies, detains from a worthy person those acknowledgments, which are due to his virtues; robs virtue herself of one of her fairest jewels, strips off her garments of praise, and buries her alive: since therefore, to rob a virtuous person of his honour and reputation, is so great an outrage to virtue itself; it must also needs be highly unjust and dishonest. The great iniquity of detraction, and of lessening or debasing men's deserved praise and commendations through envy, is injurious to God: who may do, what he will, with his own: but it is a higher injustice to man, than to pick his pocket; for he who clips a man's honour, robs him of his best and dearest property: while he sucks the veins of another's reputation, to put colour into the cheeks of his own, he lives upon the spoils of his neighbour; and is every whit as injurious to him, as if he should pull down his house, to build himself another by the ruins thereof.

Nevertheless, this unrighteous practice is common: though to envy at God's kindness to others, *Of Envy.* be (in effect) a murmuring against him. We cannot oppose God more, than by hating and doing evil to a man because God hath loved him and done well to him: nor, in respect of the man, can there be any thing more irrational than to love him the less, merely because he is endued with those qualities, for which (in reason and justice) we ought to love him the more. As, in all ordinary cases, thankfulness is plainly our duty, for what we have; so nothing can be more unreasonable, than discontent for what we have not. We know not the deserts of others, in comparison with ourselves: we know not the various and wise designs of providence, in the unequal distributions of all temporary things: we know not, how much better (possibly) our present state and condition is for us, whatsoever it be, than any other state or condition; which we, through ignorance and impatience, may be apt most earnestly to covet, and envy in others. But it is not enough that we envy no man; we must not strive to lessen his excellencies,

cellencies, in the opinion of others ; for nothing does more truly discover our murmuring and envy, than to endeavour to ruin the credit of any thing in another's esteem : yet this is the case of all those, who would deny, either the kinds or degrees, of his neighbour's extraordinary gifts or graces ; by speaking slightly of them, or by endeavouring to cloud them with a malicious report of some other real or pretended infirmity of his ; which, like dead flies (as the Preacher writes) may corrupt the savour of the ointment. The folly of this sin of envy appears, in the pain and torment it exposes a man to ; and, in his being deprived by it, of those advantages which he might reap from such extraordinary gifts of his neighbour ; whether they be wisdom or learning, piety or virtue : neither is the folly of detraction less manifest, because it seldom fails of being discovered ; and then the detractor lessens his own character ; and the neighbour, he intended to injure, obtains more esteem for those excellencies, which were the object of the other's envy.

Of detraction.

As for the several degrees of nobility, titles, and places of dignity, by which men are advanced above the vulgar class of mankind ; they are so many marks and badges of honour. It is true, by virtue of this titular dignity, we are no farther obliged to reverence or esteem men, than their wisdom or virtue deserves :

Respect, due to men of Rank and Quality.

yet we are bound, to give them their due titles, and demean ourselves towards them with that outward preference, observance, and ceremony, which their degree and quality requires ; on account of that lawful authority, which has raised them to that state and condition of life. Wherefore, as dignities entitle men to an outward respect and observance, so also do riches and large possessions : for, when God bestows upon one man a larger fortune and possession, than on another ; he doth thereby prefer and advance him, into an higher sphere and condition : and, when God hath set him above us, it is just and fit, that we raise and give that place to him, which is of God's appointment. A wise or virtuous poor man may have a juster right to our esteem, than a fortunate knave or fool : yet, forasmuch

Respect, due to the rich.

as, in outward rank and condition, God hath preferred the latter ; he hath the rights of precedency, and of outward respect and observance ; and ought to be treated, with greater regard and obeisance. This is a duty so incumbent upon all, that our church hath thought proper to teach it in her first rudiments of christianity ; where children are taught, *to order themselves lowly and reverently, to all their betters.*

Again, if our neighbour be in want, of knowledge, comfort, counsel, advice, reproof, or defence ; we are, according to the ability God has given us, not only to demand their respect ; but to assist others, when they are ignorant, in affliction, drawn into sin, and under the defamation of an evil tongue. Thus also, when the necessities of the poor call upon us ; we must relieve their bodily wants, by a bounteous contribution from our purse, as due to them from that treasure, which God has committed in trust to our charge : for, in all these cases, we are to look upon ourselves, only as God's stewards ; and therefore, ought to dread the punishment of the unjust steward, and the loss of those abilities ; which God has a right to take from those, who do not faithfully employ them to the ends, for which they were given them : for the with-holding from the poor, more than is meet, tends to poverty.

A third qualification, which makes any thing we possess due to our neighbour, is that degree of Relation, which is between debtor and creditor ; whereby we are obliged justly to pay, what we owe, by bargain, loan, or promise ; as I have more largely shewn before. *

VII. He also, who doth a good turn, deserves and merits of him who receives it ; and hath a right, to what he deserves. Gratitude consists in an equal return of benefits, if we be able ; and of thanks, if we be not. Consequently, every receiver is debtor to his benefactor, whether spiritual or corporal : he must, not only acknowledge the benefit received, and pray to God for him ; but owes him, when he

* See Sunday 10. Sect. 7.

he hath opportunity, a suitable return. Though my benefactor conferred the benefit freely, as having no need of it himself, or not so much as I; and therefore cannot legally demand a repayment of it: yet, whatsoever he gives me, he deserves of me: and, if ever circumstances change; and he have my need, and I his ability; I am in conscience, as much obliged to repay it, as if he had lent it me upon legal security; because, in this case, my ability is security for the benefit I owe him, and his need is a just demand of it: and since, what he hath merited of me, is his due; I am unjust, if I do not repay him so far, as I am able, when his necessity requires it. Yet, if either I be not able to repay him, or he have no occasion for it; I am in justice to express my gratitude, by thankful acknowledgments; and, by all the service I can render him, to shew a willingness to make him a full return. As in matter of debt, he, who cannot pay all, must compound and pay so far as he is able; so, in the matter of benefits, he, who cannot make a complete requital, is obliged in justice to make some composition, and pay so much as his ability extends to; and, if he can do no more, to give thankful words for benefits received, which generous benefactors esteem the noblest return. He, who receives benefits without some thankful acknowledgment, acts the part of a swine; which greedily devours the acorns, and never looks up towards the tree from which they drop: and he, who requites benefits with injuries, acts the part of him, who would fain have thrown that blessed Being out of heaven, who created and placed him therein.

S U N D A Y XII.

- I. Of CHARITY or love to our NEIGHBOUR'S Soul, and Body, as it respects our Affections; with the Effects, Motives, and Pleasantness of this duty: II. As it respects our Actions; in what cases, and how, to admonish the vicious; how to behave towards those, who are sick, in prison, or persecuted: a caution to those, who prosecute an offender, go to law, or imprison an insolvent debtor. III. Of CHARITY to men's Goods: the manner, object, proportion,

proportion, and reward, of Almsgiving. IV. Of CHARITY to our NEIGHBOUR's Credit and Reputation, with rules to perform it. V. Of Peace-making, going to law, and loving our enemies.

I. **T**HE *second* general branch of duty to *Of Charity.* Our Neighbour is CHARITY. By Charity, I do not mean only Almsgiving; for, that is only one branch, one outward expression, of this duty: I mean the most liberal sentiments, the most enlarged affections, towards all mankind. A charitable man will endeavour to see every thing, through the mirror of good nature; which mends and beautifies all objects, without altering any: far, from surmising evil, where there is none; he will rather think no evil, where there really is; judging it better, to err through a good-natured credulity, than through an undistinguishing suspicion: he will never hate any body or community of men, provided there be nothing immoral in their profession, however he may dislike some individuals in it; neither will he pass a hard precipitate censure, upon a whole nation or country. Can any thing good come out of Nazareth? was a low, confined, ungenerous thought: goodness is not limited to, or excluded from, any place; but diffuses itself, through all nations, all sects, all persuasions, all ranks and orders of men. True Charity ever dwells with a largeness of soul, which takes in all mankind; sincerely wishing, that all, who are in any material error, may embrace the truth; and that all, who embrace it, may hold a pure faith in a pure conscience. In short, true Charity detests nothing, but vice; and despises nothing, but contracted, illiberal notions. Charity is a love of our neighbour, which consists in doing all good offices, and shewing kindness towards our neighbour, both in our affections and actions; a duty, to which we are disposed, by the frame of our nature, and by our inclination to society; in which there can be no pleasure nor advantage, without mutual love and compassion: it is the best expression of love towards God, since our neighbour is God's creature and image, the object of his love and mercy. This is the command, our blessed Saviour particularly urged upon his disciples; and that as earnestly,

neftly, as if he required nothing else in comparifon thereof: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.' This is the proper badge and cognizance of the christian profeffion; by which the difciples of Jesus were to be diftinguifhed from the difciples of any other profeffion: and, in the beginning of christianity, this virtue was fo well praftifed, that the very heathens did admire it, and fay, 'Behold, how thefe christians love one another!' This commandment is founded in nature; but our Lord and Saviour has enlarged it, as to its object, having extended it to all mankind: he has fo greatly advanced it, as to the extent of it, even to the laying down our lives for one another; and has fo effectually taught, fo mightily encouraged, fo very much urged and infifted upon it; that it may very well be called a new commandment: for, though it was not altogether unknown to mankind before; yet it was never taught in this manner, neither was fo much ftrefs laid upon it, by any other appointment. 'By this (faith Christ) fhall all men know, that ye are my difciples, if ye have love one to another.'

The Charity of our Affections difpofes us, to love our neighbour in fuch a manner; that, if he be virtuous, it will make us efteem him; if he be honeft, but weak in judgment, it will raife pity and fuccour; if he be wicked, it will incline us to pious admonition, to reclaim him: if he receive good, it will make us rejoice; if he receive evil, which we cannot redrefs, it will make us take pity on him: if we can, it will make us relieve him, by fupplying his neceffities, or by hiding his difgrace, if it be deferved, which is concealing our neighbour's defects; and by wiping it off, where it is not deferved, which is vindicating his reputation or good name. If he be our inferior, it will make us affable and courteous; if our equal, it will make us candid, and ready to maintain a good correfpondence; if our fuperior, refpectful and fubmiffive: if we receive good from him, it will make us thankful, and defirous to requite it; if we receive evil, it will make us flow to anger, eafy to be entreated, ready to forgive; long-fuffering and merciful, when we are juftly angry.

*Charity, in
the Affec-
tions.*

In

In this description of Charity towards our neighbour, is included a desire of doing all the good in our power, to his *soul*, his *body*, *goods*, and *credit*. This virtue will make

Charity, to the souls, bodies, goods, and credit, of men.

us concerned for the salvation of men's Souls; and put us upon means, of recovering them from a state of sin and unbelief. The next branch of Charity regards the Bodies of men, to which we are to wish all health and welfare. Though natural blemishes and defects (such, as lameness or crookedness, the want of our senses, or the disproportion of our parts or features) render our bodies less useful, or less graceful and lovely; and do not only upbraid us to ourselves, but create a contemptible opinion of us in the minds of others; the suspicion of which is apt, to grieve and afflict our minds: Charity requires us, not to condemn men, nor to upbraid or reproach them, upon the account of any bodily infirmity; but to render them all respect, which the graces and virtues of their minds are worthy of. The Body is not the man, but the immortal mind which inhabits it: and many times the richest diamonds wear the roughest coats. Natural blemishes are infelicities, which men cannot prevent or rectify; therefore, to deride and expose them for any blemish in their composition, is to fling salt into their wounds, to fret and inflame their miserable condition. But our desire of our neighbour's welfare should not stop here; for, whoever does not wish that his neighbour's Goods and Credit may thrive and prosper, can never be said to love his neighbour as himself.

When the love of God secures our own duty; and makes us earnestly concerned, that all the world be influenced by the same divine flame, and our neighbour become a fit object of infinite mercy: when we are sensibly touched, with the blindness and obstinacy of wicked christians; and endeavour by the properest methods to cure their ignorance, and to remove their great indifference to the business of religion: when we are careful, to propose and establish the rules of piety, in our families, and among our friends and relations; and, that our discourse and conversation be edifying: when we recommend virtue, by our own example; and by our prayers, for the conversion

version of sinners, and for the perseverance of the righteous: when we conceal all things, which may offend the weak; and publish, whatever may tend to encrease the love of virtue: when we take all occasions, of praising those, who live well; of honouring them before the world, and of giving them the preference in the favours we are able to confer: when the civilities and liberalities we exercise, and the friendships we contract, aim at the recovering the soul from evil, and improving it in what is good; and when the comfort and relief we give to the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, tend to make the design of God's providence towards them effectual for their amendment, if they be bad; or for their improvement, if they be good; that they may learn to adore the Author of their afflictions, and wisely fix their minds upon a good that is stable and permanent: then shall we be sure, that we act like disciples of Christ, and that the Holy Ghost has added zeal to our charity; especially, when it is observed to be dealt towards all men, without respect of persons: then will this principle of love and charity and good-will to mankind, not only render the mind quiet and easy, calm and composed; but make a man happy in himself, and a blessing and comfort to all about him; and consequently attract the love and esteem and admiration of all those, who see and feel the kind and benign influences of so divine a temper.

This will not only cast out Envy (for, as the apostle saith, Charity envieth not, will not suffer us to grudge and repine at another's good) but it also conquers Pride and a haughty mind: for Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Whoever therefore vilifies or disdains his neighbour, breaks the command, and forfeits his right to the discipleship of Christ. Put on therefore (says the Apostle) bowels of mercy, kindness, and humbleness of mind, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. It also casteth out Censoriousness and rash-judging: for charity thinketh no evil of our neighbour's words or actions; believeth nothing, but what is good of him; and hopeth all things, for his welfare and credit: so that it is the want of this virtue, maketh place for unmerciful censures

It casts out Envy.

Pride.

Censoriousness.

centures and rash judgments. Again, Charity is without dissimulation; disdaineth to speak a man fair to his face, and injure him behind his back; and despiseth all little arts and contrivances for private gain and advantage, which must rise upon the injury of our neighbour. In a word; where this christian virtue reigns, there can be no malice nor desire of revenge: for, it beareth all things, let them be never so injurious; opposing prayers and blessings to the hottest persecutors, and leaving the issue and vengeance to the Lord, with a full assurance, that he will never suffer his servants to be rooted out.

Dissembling.

Self-seeking.

Revenge.

Charity extends, even to enemies.

The duty of Charity extends not only to the innocent, but to the guilty; we must forgive those, also, who offend us; and this forgiveness of Enemies, peculiar to christians, consists in bearing a sincere affection towards them, though they be malicious and implacable. There are two kinds of love, which we must distinguish here; the love of approbation or esteem, and the love of benevolence or good-will. Now, it may be impossible sometimes, to pay the former kind of love (in any great degree) to our enemy; namely, when his vices far overbalance his virtues: we cannot, with any considerable degree of approbation and complacency, love him, who does not appear lovely to our understanding: but, should it be granted, that we could not regard an immoral enemy with any love of approbation; yet still this would not excuse us, from shewing a love of benevolence and good-will to him. A parent is far from approving a child, who is stubborn, disobedient and immoral; yet still his love, of benevolence and good-will, shall continue in all its force and efficacy: and it is this kind of love, which the scripture seems to require from us: if our enemy hunger, we are to feed him; if he thirst, we are to give him drink. Christians deceive themselves, if they think it is enough, not to wish evil, and to do no harm: we should be ready to forgive them, and to remove all misunderstandings: we should so far forgive them, as to abstain from revenge; and though they repent not of the evil done to us, we must nevertheless pray for them, and do them

them all kind and humane offices : we should so forgive, as readily to agree to a perfect reconciliation to those, who have offended us ; and take them again into our friendship, if they repent of their hatred.

We should rebuke our brother, if he trespass against us ; and, if he repent, we should forgive him ; according to St. Paul's direction, to forgive others, even as God for Christ's sake forgiveth us. This we are enjoined, by the

express command of our Saviour ; who hath made forgiveness of injuries the condition, without which we can expect no pardon of our sins ; and, in his own person, hath set us a pattern of this virtue, which he practised

The Motives, of forgiveness to enemies.

to the height, rendering good for evil to all the world. Moreover, it tends to the comfort and happiness of our lives ; patience and forgiveness affording a lasting and solid pleasure, in that they restrain tumultuous and unreasonable passions, and prevent many troubles, which flow from a malicious and revengeful temper. Our goodness is then perfected, when we do kindnesses, not only without merit and obligation, but in defiance of temptations which dissuade us from it. By such a practice, we discover a great mind, obtain the most valuable conquest, because gained over our own passions ; and shew ourselves to be the image of that God, who is affected towards those, who are guilty of the greatest provocations against his divine Majesty : therefore, ' Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another ; ' especially, as our pardon before God depends so much, upon our forgiving our enemies ?

This is farther enforced, by a consideration of the difference between our sins against God, and our neighbour's offences against us. In this

comparison, the infinite majesty of God, and the equality of human nature in every station, will satisfy us, that we owe a perfect obedience to our Maker, as the God of all power and might : whereas all powers amongst men are ordained of God : all we

The disproportion of our offences against God, and of men's against us.

enjoy, of the necessaries, comforts, or satisfactions of life, are out of the abundance of his goodness and mercy ; and they, who do not thankfully acknowledge his free

free gifts, are guilty of the greatest ingratitude ; an ingratitude no ways applicable to men, because they differ as much as time and eternity. We never sin, but we break God's commands, and offend him ; but the most envious and malicious person can never find those frequent opportunities, of offending his fellow-creature. This disproportion, between our offences against God and man, is excellently described in the parable of the lord, who forgave his servant ten thousand talents ; and yet that servant would not forgive his fellow-servant one hundred pence.

These considerations are still heightened by that pleasure, which they feel, who are constant in the practice of this great duty : whose delight may be discerned even at a distance, by comparing it with the disgrace and uneasiness, which its contraries (revenge and malice,) constantly produce, both to our bodies and minds ; as also, by the manifest and dreadful hazard they run, never to be pardoned of God, who forgive not those who have offended them : and lastly, by that thankfulness to God and Christ ; who of his free grace sent his beloved Son, to die for us his enemies, and (having brought us into a capacity of happiness) expects such returns, as his love exemplifies and demands.

All these considerations will effectually take place in those minds, where the first beginnings of rancour, malice, and revenge, are opposed and stifled : and without this care, neither those, nor any other motives of christian charity, can ever find a place in the heart ; because these rather serve to prevent, than to cure, the wound. Let us therefore cultivate that love, in which there is no torment ; whereas a soul, embittered with revenge, is a perpetual seat of war. Whatever disturbs the calm and easy course of our passions, must make us miserable. The life of an angry and revengeful man is all over storm and tempest : he is like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt : he is a stranger to peace, and all the blessed fruits and effects of it ; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work : his mind is continually restless
and

*The Pleas-
antness of
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sings of ran-
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and uneasy, agitated to and fro with the violent force of unruly passions, which lead him on from one evil to another, and hurry him many times into those of a very mischievous consequence.

II. From charitable and benevolent Thoughts, the transition is unavoidable, to *charitable Actions*: for he who has a hearty determinate will to be charitable, will seldom put off men with the meer will for the deed. As St.

Of Charity in the Actions.

James teacheth, in regard to faith; our cold love is dead, if we approve not our hearts before God by such works of mercy, as shall convince our neighbour, that we sincerely desire the good of his soul, body, goods, and credit. Our good wishes should not only extend to the mind of our neighbour; but, whenever it is oppressed with any heaviness, we should endeavour to comfort and refresh him, by all the christian council and advice we can.

Towards the Mind of our neighbour.

If our neighbour's Soul be cast down with any dreadful or despairing thoughts, we are still more concerned to support him. If he wilfully run into sin; we must do, what lies in our power, in person, or by other proper means, to reclaim him from the evil of his ways: and though our endeavours prove ineffectual, we must not cease to pray, and even to weep in secret, for him; because he keeps not God's law, and because he will not know the things which belong to his peace. 'God forbid (said Samuel) that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you;' when he could not dissuade the people, from their evil courses.

His soul.

The Body of our neighbour must also partake of our charity: for, as St. James likewise observes, 'If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of you say unto them, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;" notwithstanding ye give them not those things, which are needful to the body; what doth it profit either the afflicted or your own soul?' Let that man, whose charity shews itself only in his lips, recollect, that our Saviour requires the relieving of our neighbour's bodily wants, as a necessary part of our duty; and

Charity in respect of the Body.

and promises to make it a part of his inquiry, at the judgment in the last day: and upon those, who wilfully omit it, he has already pronounced that dreadful sentence; 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' Therefore, let us endeavour, to escape that dreadful judgment, by exercising our charity; at least according to these general heads, set down in the same passage, namely, by giving meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty; by harbouring the stranger, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and imprisoned: we must lay hold of all opportunities, to assist our necessitous brethren; and with the good Samaritan, make no distinction of nation or party, but do all the good in our power, and look upon every object as a call from heaven to put our pious intentions in practice.

Charity towards our neighbour requires us, when we see an obstinate sinner, to give him seasonable Reproofs and tender Admonitions, to reclaim him from his evil conversation. Yet this merciful work of admonition ought to be managed with caution. * There is a particular tenderness, due to persons under a present affliction; not only, that we may seem not to vex them, whom God hath wounded; and persecute them, whom he hath afflicted: but also, because men are more susceptible of resentment, in proportion to the greatness of their distress. If the person we reprove, be out of our power; we ought to forbear, until his passion be over, until his mind be calm and easy: whoever reproves a man, when disordered by passion or intemperance, preaches patience to the wind; which the more he endeavours to resist, the louder it will storm. When a man is fit to receive reprehension; we ought to give it, with the greatest privacy: if he offend in public, where there are witnesses, unless the matter be highly scandalous; it is sufficient, that we express our dislike of it by our looks and the seriousness of our behaviour, and afterwards shew the folly and danger of his sin in private: to reprove men publicly, looks more like malice than mercy; especially, until we have first made trial of private reproofs, and found them unsuccessful.

* See the duty of a friend in pages 240, 241, 242, 243, 244.

ful. Neither ought we to mingle lightness or drollery, passion or upbraidings, with our reproofs; but to perform this merciful office, with modesty, seriousness, and compassion: to reprove a man lightly or passionately, derides and reproaches him for his sin, but never reclaims him from it. Again, we ought to reprove him for matters culpable, not to reprehend him for any innocent freedom, nor for every trifling indecency, but only for plain and unquestionable trespasses upon Religion; lest he look upon our reproofs, as the language of a proud and ill-natured temper: but rather represent, that a vicious state doth weaken and disable men's faculties, impair the health and vigour of their minds; and that for their recovery it is necessary, their thoughts be fixed on a consideration of the evil and danger of their sins, and of the blessed hopes which God hath set before them, to renounce and forsake them. And, since we every day see so many sorrowful instances of men, who, in their sober thoughts, lament their follies; and blush in the morning, when they remember, how their brains were set on float by their last night's intemperance: who yet, when the next temptation beckons them again, return as greedily to it, as ever: and though when they have repented of their sin, they resolve against it; yet, when they are tempted, sin again, and call themselves miserable: in this case we are particularly bound in mercy, to recommend their condition to the God of all grace and compassion; to beseech him to take pity on their weakness, and with the out-stretched arm of his grace to touch their dead souls, and raise them up into a thorough conversion: and though in all cases of misery, prayer be a proper work of mercy; yet there is none, which so much needs our prayers, as this.

Charity requires us to render to our neighbours, friends, and acquaintance, who (through sickness, imprisonment, persecution or any other misfortune) have need of our assistance, such good offices, as conduce to their support or recovery: and, if their sickness be such, as will safely admit of conversation; we are obliged to visit them, to cheer their drooping spirits and sorrowful hours with godly conversation, and to administer the supports

*Charity to
those in
sickness*

and comforts of religion ; to awaken their minds, into serious thoughts and purposes ; to resolve their doubts ; to comfort and support them, with the hopes of glory ; and to take all opportunities of preparing their souls for a happy death : that so, whether they recover or no, this sickness of their bodies may contribute to their souls health. If they be poor and indigent, we ought to supply them with such remedies, as are necessary to their health and recovery. When a man is in prison, he is in a sort of captivity. Is it not a calamitous condition, to be

In prison. shut up in a close and unwholesome gaol ; to dwell with hunger and cold, confined to hard

lodging and wretched companions ; to be withheld from the conversation of friends, from the comforts of diversion, and from business and employment, and all opportunities of making provision for his family in distress ? Therefore it is our duty towards these unfortunate men, to visit them in this their uncomfortable imprisonment, if they be our friends and acquaintance ; and to divert their sorrows, to strengthen their hopes, and to cheer them with assurances of friendship ; to endeavour to soften their adversaries, to vindicate their innocence ; and to compound with their creditors, if they be not able to discharge their debts : and, whether they be our friends or acquaintance or no ; charity obliges us, as we have opportunity and ability, to relieve their necessities, to redress their injuries, to contribute to their enlargement ; that they may, by their honest industry, make provision for those, who depend on their honest endeavours. Those,

Under persecution. who are unjustly persecuted for conscience sake ; who, to secure their souls, are forced to fly, or to submit to spoil and plunder, to imprisonment and famine and death ; are, of all others,

the greatest objects of our mercy ; because they suffer, for our common Master, and in our common cause : if we have any compassion therefore, by what more suitable act can we express it ; than, by a kind reception of those, when they fly to us for succour, and a liberal contribution towards their relief and subsistence ; and by assisting those with the charity of our prayers, whom we cannot reach with the charity of our alms ; by remembering those, who are in bonds, to pity and pray for them ;

them; and if it be in our power, so to visit and relieve them, as being bound with them; and also to remember those, who suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body.

If it fall to our lot at any time, to prosecute an offender, in a just cause; we must remember, that, though injuries give us a right to punish the offender, by course of law, or by our own power, when at our own disposal: *How to prosecute an Offender.*

yet, because men's souls are out of the reach of human punishments; we can exact no other penalties of offenders, but such as affect their bodies with shame or pain, with loss of goods, with wearisome labour or confinement; which punishment is more an act of mercy, than revenge; the end of it being to do good, rather than to return evil for evil: since then the end of punishment is, to do good, it ought to be inflicted with a kind intention; not to discharge our rage, or recreate our malice; but to vindicate our right, to reclaim the offender, or terrify others by his punishment. Consequently, in lighter injuries, should a man accuse me of falshood; or revile or reproach me: mercy requires, that I remit and forgive the fault, and not strike or wound him, nor rigidly exact by a vexatious law-suit, satisfaction for trifling offences, which do me no harm. Or, if I have an insolvent debtor, who owes me a great deal, and can pay me nothing: though it be in my power, according to the letter of the law, to cast him into prison, and force him to languish away his wretched life; to what end shall I inflict this punishment? I cannot hope to recover my own by this means; a prison will pay no debts. Can I pretend, to reform him by it? No; prisons are fruitful nurseries of all evil. Neither can I warn others by it; for, what warning can oblige men to do that, which is not in their power? He therefore is an unmerciful creditor; who, rather than abate the least part of his due, will strip his poor debtor to the skin, and reduce him to the utmost extremity: he is also an unmerciful punisher, who exacts to the full desert of the fault, and stretches his right of punishment to the utmost extent, to make the offender miserable, without any service to himself or the publick.

In a word, mercy requires us to follow the great example of God ; who in the midst of justice, doth always remember mercy ; who makes large abatements of his right to punish us, and never inflicts the utmost punishment, which our iniquities deserve. Wherefore, in punishing others, we ought to mingle mercy with our severities ; and, proportionably to the offender's penitence, or the pitiable circumstance of his fault, or the necessities of his present condition, to make a favourable allowance.

SUNDAY XII. PART II.

III. **C**HARITY should also be shewn towards the *Goods* of our neighbour, whether he be rich or poor, by assisting and furthering him in all honest ways to improve and to preserve them. If our rich neighbour be like to suffer loss, we are not to permit it, if it be in our power any ways to prevent it ; but should take all opportunities of advancing his profit, when it does not lessen our own substance. But, if our poor neighbour call upon our charity, we must freely part with our own, to supply his necessities : for, (as St. John saith) ‘ Whoso *Towards the Rich.* hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth his bowels of *Towards the Poor.* compassion from him ; how dwelleth the love of God in him ?’

If we see our brother have need, pinched with hunger, or parched with drought ; his hungry family crying for want of bread, and none to give them : his children shivering with cold, and drooping with famine, without any view of relief ; whilst their pined carcases are covered with rags, and more destitute (than the beasts of the field, and birds of the air) for want of proper shelter, where to lay their heads : we are then obliged by Charity, to feel a tender sympathy ; to affect our souls with a compassionate sense of the wants of our poor brethren ; and represent their condition,

on, as if it were our own. To relieve the poor is declared by the Apostle to be a sacrifice, wherewith God is well pleased, and accepted by him : wherefore the church of Christ hath always joined it, as a proper part of a christian's duty, to the administration of the Lord's supper : where, among many other such-like scriptural exhortations, it is said, ' To do good and to distribute, forget not.' Indeed if we ourselves be poor and needy, we are not obliged to pinch ourselves and our families, to relieve the necessities of others ; for, the desire of self-preservation being the most vehement passion in our nature, God doth thereby not only warrant, but direct us, to take care of ourselves ; and not to sacrifice the means of our own preservation, to the necessities of our neighbours.

As the obligations we are continually under, to practise this duty, are great and numerous ; it may be useful, to distinguish them into their proper heads ; as they arise from the consideration either of God, our Neighbour, or Ourselves. With respect to God ; Is it not the thing he has chosen, ' to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burthens, to let

Motives to Almsgiving.

In regard to God.

' the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke ?' Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring to thy house the poor, which are cast out ; when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and hide not thyself from thine own flesh ? Nothing is more agreeable to the nature of God, and renders us more conformable to the excellencies of that most perfect pattern, than the exercise of beneficence and goodness. The divine nature is goodness itself ; and his bountiful kindness extends itself perpetually over all his works ; this is the attribute, he principally delights to exercise ; and in which, he expects and requires, we should most imitate him. Our Saviour, in all his discourses, proposes this example to us ; and frequently repeats it, that hereby only we can truly become the children of our Father which is in heaven. Some portions at least, of what we enjoy, are due to God ; as an acknowledgment, of our dependence upon him for the whole : instead of costly sacrifices and burnt-offerings to himself, he only requires, that we be willing

to relieve the necessities of men like ourselves. He seems, in the wisdom of his providence, to have made a very unequal distribution of the blessings of this life ; on purpose, that we might have continual opportunities, of paying this reasonable homage to him, according to our respective abilities : he undoubtedly designed the good things of this world, not for the gratification of a few of his creatures, but for the benefit of all. He hath divided them unequally amongst us : not, that one part of the human race should sink under misery and want, and the other look down with contempt upon them ; but, that pity and gratitude should be mutually exercised, and the pleasure of doing and receiving good be felt among men : that the poor might be serviceable to the rich ; they, in return kind to the poor ; and both be united in the bonds of mutual good-will, from a sense of their mutual dependency. This is the return he principally expects from us, for all the benefits he has done unto us ; and this, he declares, he will accept, as the best expression of our love towards him.

With respect to our Neighbour, the obligations we are under, to practise this excellent duty, are likewise great and many. The inducements we have, to relieve the miseries and promote the good of our fellow-creatures, are (God be thanked) both many in number and of various kinds. Our hearts naturally incline us to it ; our reason approves of it, as right : the more benevolent disposition we are of, the truer peace we have within, and the greater capacity of social happiness, the sweetest part of the enjoyment of life : willingness to do good, is always rewarded with the esteem of mankind ; but selfishness of temper is the constant object of every one's aversion. We have frequent experience in ourselves, of what it is to suffer ; and are therefore inexcusable, if we overlook it in others : we live in a world, where, were it not for the exercise of mercy and pity, the face of things would look dreadful with miserable objects ; and the multitudes of persons, driven to despair, would make society unsafe. Besides, we know the vicissitudes of human affairs ; and are nearly concerned to encourage, by our example, that spirit of goodness and compassion, which we or ours may
(on

(on one occasion or other) easily come to have great need of. We are all partakers of the same common nature, and are therefore under the same ties of common humanity : we are all subject to the same infirmities, all liable to fall under the same misfortunes, all obnoxious to the same wants ; and therefore have all of us reason, to exercise that compassion, which no man knows but he may stand in need of himself. God has, in the whole, an equal regard to all his creatures : but, in the present state, he has made an unequal distribution of temporal blessings ; that one man's abundance may supply another man's want, and charity make an equality.

With respect to Ourselves, it is almost as natural for us, to feel an agreeable satisfaction and inexpressible pleasure of mind, upon satisfying a hungry soul with bread, or cloathing the naked with a garment ; as it is for them to be pleased with the sense of their being relieved from these natural wants. On the contrary, what pleasure, what benefit is there, in the possession of those things ; which, after supplying our own necessities, and making reasonable provision for our families, are laid up, as useless and unprofitable superfluities ; if we intend, only to secure ourselves against future contingencies ? A reasonable provision of this kind is neither contrary to religion, nor inconsistent with charity ; but, beyond this, an unbounded desire of heaping up great riches is by no means so very advantageous in this very respect, as a charitable dispensing them in wise proportions would be : for, such is the instability of all temporal things, that no man can ever be so happy, as to be out of the reach of misfortune. Before God, the best of men are sinners ; and there are but few, whose conversation with men has been so inoffensive, as not to deserve severe returns ; and how prosperous soever a man's circumstances may be, the next turn of affairs may tumble him headlong into wretchedness. Since therefore every man may be miserable, what can be more just, than to deal with those who are so ; as we would be dealt by, if we were in the same circumstances ? Consequently it is highly reasonable, that every one should give and ask, by the same measures or allowances : because, as we are equal by

As it respects ourselves.

nature, whatsoever is fit for one, must be fit for another in the like condition. It is either not fit, that I should desire relief, when miserable, or else it is fit, that I should grant relief to others, when they are so: which if I refuse, either I am unreasonable, in desiring charity, when I need it; or unjust, in denying charity, when asked by those I am able to relieve. We know not, how soon riches may be snatched from us, by numberless unforeseen accidents; or we may as suddenly be taken from them, and our souls be required of us this very night: in this case, no other part of them will be really beneficial to us, but that, which by works of charity hath been before lent to the Lord, who in the life to come will repay it again: and, even in respect of our continuance in this present world, (considering the variety of accidents, to which all human affairs are subject) that, which has been well laid out in doing good to mankind, has a greater probability of turning to our advantage, even here; than that, which may have been covetously treasured up. If I should want relief, with what face can I expect it, if I be deaf to the wants of the poor? If I shew no compassion, I must take heed that I never need any: for, it will be very unreasonable, to expect it; because, by my unmerciful treatment of others, I set an example against myself; as it would be imprudence in me, to plead for mercy either in heaven or earth.

If we give alms of our mercy and compassion, we must do it cheerfully; for God loveth a cheerful giver. By compassion, we make others miseries our own; and by relieving them we relieve ourselves, and are partakers with them in the comfort. Is it not a matter of great pleasure and delight, to see the joy, which a seasonable benefaction brings to one in distress? When I see a man groaning under necessity, if I relieve him, I refresh my own bowels; and nature within me melts into compassion. Therefore, when we bestow our alms with an unwilling mind, it is not charity, but shame or importunity, moves us; and there is no virtue in them, nor can we expect any reward: to contribute towards another's relief, because I am ashamed to do otherwise, is rather paying a tax, than giving alms; and, when no-
thing

thing can be wrung out of me, but what is distrained by importunity, I give not for the poor's relief, but for my own quiet; as he did, who neither feared God nor man.

A good man will be so far, from being discouraged in his works of mercy, by the vain and impious fear of impoverishing himself thereby; that he will still abound more and more in charity, upon a due consideration, that although this hazard were never so apparent, yet it is the command of God. Do not men rest very well satisfied in their condition, and look upon themselves to be safe enough from want; if they have security given them by some wealthy friend, that he will always supply their need and support them? Has not the charitable man this security given him by God himself, who bids men to trust in him, and to do good, with this assurance, that such shall dwell in the land and be fed?

The vain and impious fear of impoverishing ourselves by it.

We must also give seasonably, Indeed, all times may be thought seasonable, to relieve the poor: yet there are particular seasons, when their wants call louder; as times of sickness, scarceness of work, dearth of provision; or on arrests, before the prison hath devoured them; or after a great loss, when their fortunes are dwindling away. When children are young, and capable of work or instruction, and parents not able to dispose of them; when the placing them out to some honest calling may prevent their turning thieves or beggars, and render them useful to the world; or when they are setting up their trades with an insufficient stock, and a little help may encourage their diligence, and advance them to a comfortable livelihood: these are the more proper seasons of almsgiving; in which, by our helping hand, we may rescue many a poor wretch out of deplorable misery, and render their future condition prosperous and happy.

Give seasonably.

Whenever it is in our power to practise this duty of almsgiving, it ought to be performed with a merciful intention; not to court the applauses of men, or to serve any secular designs; but to express our gratitude and duty to God, who hath

How to be practised.

filled us with an overflowing plenty for that very reason, to do good therewith. If we give our alms to serve a wordly interest, they proceed from self-love ; and such pharisaical alms are sordid traffick for applause and interest : our Saviour cautions us, to take heed, that we do not our alms before men, to be seen of them ! otherwise we have no reward of our Father, which is in heaven.

Not by unjust gain.

Neither are we to give that in alms, which is none of our own ; supposing it to have a rightful owner, to whom we can make a restitution : but, where there is no visible owner, the property reverts to the hands of the supreme Lord of the world, who hath settled it as a pension on our poor brethren. To seek after and exact unlawful gains, which we are obliged in justice to restore to the rightful owners, is to make ourselves the thieves, and the poor the receivers ; if such practices be done, with a view to gather riches for such purposes : for to give away any

Nor a creditor's substance.

man's right to supply another's necessity, is not so much an alms, as a robbery, in the sight of God. Debtors also are obliged in conscience, not to disable themselves from being just to their creditors, by being merciful to such as are in need.

The charitable man will also use as much prudence, *Prudently.* as circumstances will permit ; bestowing his alms, where most needed, and in such a manner, as may do the receiver most good, and himself no injury : for, if we manage not our charities with prudence, we shall create necessities by supplying them ; and multiply miseries, by an unskilful endeavour to redress them. It is with alms, as it is with estates : half the enjoyment consists in the discretion of the owner ; and charities, distributed by a blind superstition or a foolish pity, many times do more hurt than good. What harvest can the world reap, from this precious seed of alms ; when they are scattered at all adventures, without any distinction of the cultivated ground from the fallow ? The birds of prey, vagrants, drones, and beggars, eat them up ; whilst the modest, impotent, and laborious poor are utterly unprovided for. We must not therefore be tempted, by the importunities of idle persons,

persons, to prostitute our alms to their intemperance and sloth. What a pity it is, these good fruits of our charity should be thus abused, to pamper idle vagabonds, who wander from door to door; whilst many poor industrious families, which have more mouths to feed than hands to work, lie drooping under necessities and want! Though the former should not be altogether neglected, when their needs are really urgent; yet prudence will direct our charity to such persons, as have fallen from riches to poverty, and are less able to toil and drudge for bread; or to such, as are worn out with labour, or disabled by sickness, or oppressed with a numerous family; but, first of all, we are obliged to relieve our relations; and, in all cases, to prefer the necessities of those, who have any dependence on us. The same prudence will direct us, to prefer those alms, which may serve for a constant provision, and put the distressed in a fixed way of living; before those, which are transient, which just hold him up from perishing for an hour, but take him not out of the deep waters of affliction: it is doubtless a prudent charity also, to contribute to the building and maintenance of public workhouses for the poor; where they and their children may be provided with such work, as they are capable of; and accustomed to industry, and enabled to support themselves in some future state of life. Prudent charity gives its alms in kind, rather than in value; clothes to the naked, food to the hungry, physic to the sick, and books to the uninstructed: the benefit of this charity to the souls of men appears at first sight; by these means they are instructed, in the great points of the christian faith; and become acquainted with the several branches of their duty, which relate to God, their neighbour, and themselves. When a book comes, as a gift, from their superiors; they are first pleased with it, as a mark of their favour, which engages them to read; and then, by the grace of God, the seriousness of the matter, and the importance of the subject, may seize upon their minds, and make them pious and devout christians. Persons of quality and fortune therefore, (if they have hearts and dispositions to give good books) are undoubtedly capable of doing abundance of

of good to their servants and tenants, and to the poor, particularly where their estates lie : by this method, they become preachers of righteousness ; and secure to themselves a share with the authors, in the reward of such performances.

As to the Proportion of our charity ; it is certain, that *Liberally.* almsgiving ought to be performed liberally and bountifully. Charity measures its alms, and proportions them to the necessities it supplies ; not only to rescue the miserable, but to render them happy. Though I give ten times less, than him who hath ten times more ; I am as liberal as he, according to my ability ; the widow's two mites were pronounced by our saviour, to be a more liberal alms, than the rich man cast into the treasury ; because he cast in of his abundance, but she of her penury : wherefore, though it be impossible, to determine the measure of our alms, because the measure of our abilities is so various ; charity requires, that we should be liberal, in proportion to our circumstances. Christ hath not indeed fixed the proportions, of any kind of charity ; for circumstances vary so infinitely, that general rules concerning such matters are impossible ; but this latitude should not give anxiety to any good mind ; for we serve a most equitable master : neither should it give encouragement to bad minds ; and make them imagine, that, where nothing is ascertained, they may do just as little as they please : for God will expect from every one, what may be reasonably expected from him ; and hath left this matter at large, not that we may shew our backwardness to serve him, but our zeal. Though we may not be able, to give alms to our necessitous brother : yet, if by representing his necessities to others, who are able to relieve him ; if by begging relief for him, (which he perhaps is ashamed to ask for himself) we can any way contribute to his support ; we stand strictly obliged to it by charity ; and this will be as acceptable to God, as the most liberal alms out of our own substance. Where the need is impossible, God accepts the wil for it, and reckons all good works to our account ; which he knows we would do, if it were in our power. So, when he furnisheth us with means to relieve the necessitous, he expects the deed ; knowing, that

that we cannot sincerely will the deed, if, when it is in our power, we do it not; the necessity of which deed, to shew the sincerity of the will, appears from that passage, where it is written; 'Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him; how dwelleth the love of God in him?'

Since then God has not determined any thing concerning it, we must leave men, who best understand their own condition, to the guidance of their own conscience and discretion; who are to consider, what is requisite to the discharge of their several obligations: *The proportion.* for prudence doth not require of all, the same proportion of charity; but of every one, according to their different circumstances and abilities: and christian prudence will direct us, not to be partial to ourselves, in stretching our needs and conveniences beyond their just bounds; to spare, what may be decently spared, from too many servants, idle meetings, unnecessary feasts, chargeable apparel and diversions. If we do spare from our needless expences, and lay aside the remains for charity, the consequence will be this: the poor will be more plentifully relieved, and we more able to do it; and we shall reap more pleasure and profit, from laying out upon the poor, than from wasting it on the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

When any miserable creature would borrow or beg of us, prudence will advise us, not to turn him away with scorn, nor yet to remove him at a distance with disdain or violence; but (if we see reason to grant him his request) to do it with an open hand, that so the freedom of our charity may raise the comfort of it, and leave no sting in the mind of the necessitous person. We ought not to oppress the modesty of the humble; of those, who have been wont to give, and not to receive; we should relieve them, not with lofty looks, or angry words, or a severe behaviour; neither should we expose their poverty, by publishing our charity, or conveying it to them in the view of the world: but we should hand our relief, in such a secret and obliging manner: that they may receive it with cheerfulness, without confusion and shame.

Alms-

Almsgiving is a real expreffion, of our love and gratitude to God and our Saviour Chrift; and
The reward of Alms-giving. ' God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have miniftred to the faints, and yet do adminifter;' fays the apoftle: He may defer, but he never forgets: ye may fafely, reckon, that fo much as ye have beftow'd in works of charity, fo much with increafe ye have fecured in the hands of God; who will either return it in temporal bleffings, or repay it with intereft: think then, what is incumbent on you, in relation to thefe things.

There are but two reafons, and they both very bad, which hinder men from being charitable according to their power; either covetoufnefs makes them unwilling, or expenfivenefs makes them imagine they are unable: if the former influence you, confider well, that your happinefs for ever depends on doing your duty; but your happinefs doth not depend even here, on enlarging your fortune. Ye may, if ye will form yourfelves to it, enjoy great fatisfaction in doing good: but, what felicity can ye poffibly find, either in the confcioufnefs of having, or the vanity of being known to have, ever fo much wealth, more than ye have occafion for? But, if the enjoyment of man's life did confift in the abundance of the things he poffeffes, charity may often be fo contrived by prudence, as not to diminifh wealth; and is often fo bleffed by heaven, as greatly to encrease it. If it be the fear of expence, which withholds you from charity; even in this cafe alfo, think with yourfelves, for what purpofe your Maker hath entrusted you: is it for vices and follies, or for pity and mercy? Ye may indeed plead, that luxury, by the numbers it employs, is perhaps the moft extenfive beneficence: but this is a poor pretence, evidently calculated to make yourfelves eafy in acting wrong. The wifdom of providence hath undoubtedly contrived, that many, who will do no good in any other way, fhall (however) do fome in this; but then it is ufually done to thofe, who need it leaft: a number of perfons, well able

able to take care of themselves otherwise, are maintained, part in idleness, and part in professions of no manner of use; whilst the true objects of compassion, the infirm and helpless, are left unregarded to suffer and perish. Luxury therefore contributes nothing, to answer the intent of Christian charities: even those it is pretended to provide for, it teaches, at the same time, to ruin themselves by the imitation of it; and in proportion, as it prevails, it destroys every where both virtue and happiness, public and private. Let therefore both the frugal and the expensive man seriously consider; the one, what proportion his charity bears, to his increase; the other to his profusions: and let each think of justifying themselves, not to the world, but to God. Possibly it may seem a good reason to some, for their own neglect of the poor, that the law makes provision for them: it is certainly an honour to the law, that it doth; but no honour to us, that it needs do it: besides, there are very many cases of great distress, to which legal provision is neither easily nor properly extended; nor can it give by any means so plentiful relief, as should be given, to the greater part of those to whom it may extend. But, suppose the law capable of doing every thing, which should be done; what would be the consequence, of leaving every thing to it? We should then entirely lose the means we now have, of proving, to the world and to ourselves, the goodness of our own hearts; and of making an undoubted free-will offering to God, out of what he hath given us. Persons of bad minds may indeed take occasion to neglect the poor, from the willingness of others to relieve them; and thus, by their fault, the burthen may fall heavier upon us than it ought. But then God, who hath entrusted us; not only, in conjunction with others, to do our share; but, separately by ourselves, to do what we can; will take abundant care, that, whatever we bear cheerfully on his account, far from giving us cause of complaint, shall assuredly be matter of great joy to us in the end: not, that we should be so vain, as to think we merit heaven thereby; neither may we presume, to drive a bargain with God, by putting our good works into the ballance with an infinite and eternal reward.

IV. CHARITY also extends to the Credit or Reputation of our neighbour. Should our innocent neighbour be maliciously brought into judgment it is our duty, not only to vindicate him from false imputations in private, but to offer our voluntary evidence before the court. Nay; should we even know him to be guilty (if some other branch of charity or justice do not oblige us to the contrary) we must not take upon us, to divulge his faults, or report them upon hearsay: for, as they are men and christians, our neighbours and our brethren in Christ; it is our duty, not only to honour good men for their virtues, but to pity the evil for their miseries; to relieve their wants, to conceal their defects, and to vindicate their injured reputation; to pray for them, and to take such steps, as may probably recover them to a true sense of their spiritual state. Suspicions, fancying the worst designs, and putting the worst interpretations upon words and actions, hard censures and suppositions, are reigning sins among adversaries; too common among those, who are otherwise serious and devout; and this, not only against particular persons, but on all hands against whole bodies and parties, who, in any thing relating to the times, are of different opinions and sentiments: all which are contrary to the nature of charity; which is always inclinable to think the best, and leans to the side of favour, both in judging and speaking of their deeds: besides, it is plainly contrary to our Lord's rule; *who warneth us, not to judge, lest we ourselves be judged; because, with what measure we meet, it will be measured to us again.* Dwelling upon an injury received, and hearkening to idle tales, encrease a fault; and aggravate the malice and unworthiness of him, who is guilty thereof: by these our resentment is heightened, and our minds are rendered difficult to be brought into temper; whereas, if we did not give way to them, we should find ourselves much more easy to forgive.

*The great
Rule of
Charity.*

to keep before your eyes that grand rule, of loving our neighbour as ourselves, which the Apostle makes the sum of our whole duty to our neighbour. Though men be so careless
of

of their spiritual affairs, as to wish for no assistance ; they are not therefore freed by this rule, from those sorts of charities ; because the love of ourselves, which is set as the measure to that of our neighbour, is understood to be that reasonable love, which men ought to have for themselves ; and therefore, though a man fail of that reasonable love he owes himself, yet his neighbour thereby forfeits not his right. Again, what we actually would that others should do to us, is not, in all cases, a rule of our duty ; but the lawfulness of the action is to be presupposed : for, I may not do, or forbear a thing, to my neighbour ; merely because I am content or desirous, that he should do, or forbear the like, to myself : that desire of mine must first be known, to agree with God's commands : for, a drunkard may be willing, to be made a beast by another ; but it is not the more lawful for him, to do the like to his neighbour : so also a wicked man cares not to be disturbed in evil courses, by the reproofs of his superiors or friends ; but that does not lessen his obligation, to be a monitor to other sinners, especially to those under his care and government. Neither do we fulfil this rule, by doing that to others, which we might be glad they would do to us ; but it consists in this, to do all that we can expect from them, as matter of duty and right : for though a poor man might be glad, that a rich person would give him a part of his estate, so as to make his circumstances easy and plentiful ; yet the rich man, who is master of his own estate, and may lawfully gratify such a desire, may as lawfully refuse to do it. In like manner, the duty, of loving our neighbour as ourselves, is not, either that we should love any neighbour with equal tenderness, as ourselves ; (for that were hardly possible) or that we should love every neighbour alike ; (which, if we suppose it possible, were neither just nor natural) or that we should do for our neighbour, all he now does, or we (in his circumstances) might perhaps wish and desire to have done, for ourselves ; for such desires may be irregular ; and if not sinful, yet unreasonable ; but it is, to do all that for him, which, were our case his and his ours, we should in reason and good conscience expect, and be glad, to have done to ourselves.

Human laws are often so numerous, as to escape our memories; so darkly and inconsistently worded sometimes, as to puzzle our understandings; and their original obscurity is not seldom improved, by the nice distinction and subtil reasonings of those, who profess to clear them: so that, under these several disadvantages, they lose much of their force and influence; and, in some cases raise more disputes, than perhaps they determine. But here is a law, attended with none of those inconveniences: the grossest minds can scarce misapprehend it, the weakest memories are capable of retaining it; no perplexing comment can easily cloud it; the authority of no man's gloss on earth can (if we be sincere) sway us, to make a wrong construction of it. What is said of all the gospel-precepts by the evangelical prophet, is more eminently true of this: 'It is an high-way; and the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.' It is not enough, that a rule, which is to be of general use, be suited to all capacities; so that, wherever it is represented to the mind, it is presently agreed to: it must also be apt to offer itself to our thoughts, and lie ready for present use, upon all exigencies and occasions: and, as the love a man bears to himself is always sincere, so should the love to our neighbour be (in this respect) as that to ourselves; not mercenary and designing, but disinterested and hearty, intending the benefit of the party we express it to; not indirectly seeking our own profit or pleasure: this end, whoever constantly aims at, and steadily pursues, will never greatly fail in the particulars of his duty. He, who loves his neighbour sincerely as himself; and is willing to do to all men as he desires they should do to him; who thinks himself sent into the world on purpose to do good to others; and looks upon it, as the sum and end of his duty, to promote the universal peace and happiness of mankind; will certainly, upon this principle, regularly and uniformly perform all the parts of his duty towards men: he will naturally treat his superiors, with chearful submission; his benefactors, with gratitude and all decent respect; his equals, with affability

lity and rediness to do all offices of kindness ; and his inferiors, with gentleness, moderation, and charity.

V. Peace-making is another great instance of charity ; which, though it doth not directly fall under any of the foregoing heads, yet frequently *Peace-making.* contributes to the practice and success of *king.*

them all : because it will not report of neighbours any thing false, nor any thing true, which may tend to variance ; and it will discourage eve-droppers and tale-bearers, who, out of malice, envy, or idleness, are busy-bodies : a peaceable man will never sow the seeds of dissention. If there be any dissention, a peace- *Shortens* able man will so behave himself, as not to en- *quarrels.* flame or widen the breach. If men would

behave with this prudence towards those, who are at variance ; it would go a great way, to the shortening of quarrels. It is vain to imagine, we shall meet with a person, who can please us in every thing : but, this we may do ; we may find out something, which should please us, in every person. A man is not fit to live in the world, who does not see several things, without seeming to see them ; who does not see through the little by-ends and selfish views, which men may have : against which he must use all the reality of caution and distrust, with as little appearances of it as possible, if he would preserve peace.

Human nature is not so very bad, as some represent it ; most of the little strifes and contentions, which happen, would die of their own accord ; if ill-natured people (pretending to be friends to both parties) did not blow the coals, and throw on fresh fuel. As coals are to burning coals, and as wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife : where no wood is, the fire goeth out ; so, where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceas- *Removes* eth. Where the contention is hot and fierce, *contention.* a lover of peace will encline both parties to

coolness and good temper. If thou blow the spark, it will burn ; and if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched ; and both these come out of thy mouth. Quarrels proceed out of the mouth, by carrying tales, aggravating offences, or persuading revenge : so damping them proceeds out of the mouth, by soft and gentle intreaties ; by representing the smallness of the things, about which they

they quarrel; and by shewing, how inconsistent it is with peace, to take offence at every thing, or to interpret it in the worst sense. When the passions are hot and enflamed on both sides, though gentle words and entreaties cannot suppress them, they may serve to bring them down: when a man, desirous to make peace, sees they are resolved to fight it out; he will endeavour, that their contention may be ended with as little hurt, as may be; he will persuade them, to refer the matter in dispute to the judgment of some wise neighbour, by whom, with less charge and more satisfaction, the strife may be ended: because, though a lawsuit may determine a controversy, it commonly continues a breach of peace and charity among the contending parties. *

Whoever undertakes this good office of peace-making, must take care, that he live a remarkably peaceable life himself: for, one or the other of the contending parties will, in all probability, be angry at good advice; and endeavour to take off the weight of such admonitions, as tend to reconciliation: if the peacemaker be given to contention also; then it may be objected, as the Hebrew did to Moses, Who made thee a judge over us? Or, at least, he may be abruptly silenced with; 'Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye.' Therefore he, who would persuade peace in another, must also be peaceable himself.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. To live peaceably with all men, in the strictest sense of the words, is a thing absolutely impossible, and out of our reach: for it depends upon, what we are not masters of: the dispositions and passions of other men. Let us take what care we can, to prevent mistakes; they will sometimes arise; let us, with never so much caution, avoid doing injuries, we cannot always avoid receiving them. Where violent

* See what has been said on this subject, in the duty of parents and children. Sunday 8. Sect. V. and also here below.

encroachments are made upon our fortune or good name, we not only may, but must, vindicate ourselves, though breach of peace and an open rupture attend our doing it: slight affronts and small injustices we may put up with; but, where we are wounded to the quick, either in our estate or reputation; we are not at liberty to be silent: to be upon our defence in such cases, is a debt we owe, to ourselves, our posterity, our relations, and friends, who have all an interest in us. When the cause of true religion suffers, from the tongues or pens of libertines and unbelievers; when any open attempts are by ill men made on the constitution of that church or state, whereof we are members; when an abient friend is traduced by lying lips, or the name of any sincerely good and virtuous man is vilified: it is our duty, in such cases, to stand up, and rebuke this spirit of treachery, malice, or profaneness: the honour of God, or the interests of virtue, at such a time, would be blemished by our silence and forbearance. He that doth not openly and heartily espouse the cause of truth, will be reckoned to have been on the other side: peace with men can never be eligible, when it implies enmity with God.

The precept here given of living peaceably, I need not use many words to explain: it is easily and universally understood. To live peaceably *How to live peaceably.* is so to demean ourselves, in all the offices and stations of life, as to promote a friendly understanding and correspondence among those we converse with; so as to prevent, as much as we can, all outward contention and strife; nay, all inward mistakes and jealousies; and to quench and allay them, as soon as we can whenever they arise: to disagree openly with no man, in things of an indifferent nature, and of no moment; and, where the point is of importance enough, to deserve to be insisted on, there to do it, with so much candour, and modesty, and sweetness, as not to offend even those we do not agree with. In a word; it is, so to conduct our actions, discourses, and dealings; as to make ourselves and others, as easy as possible.

Various are the instances of this duty. They live peace-

*Instances of
Peaceable-
ness.*

peaceably, with respect to the Publick; who pay a due regard to the laws of their country, and express a due reverence towards their superiors; honouring them sincerely, obeying them submissively; not rashly censuring their actions, but putting the best and most candid construction upon them; not being over-busy in matters, which are too high for them, and do not concern them. They live peaceably, in Religious Matters; who (on the one side) are contented to enjoy their own opinions, without arraigning their superiors in church and state for being otherwise minded; and without disturbing the public peace, to propagate their tenets, and make profelytes: and who (on the other side) do not, by unjustifiable methods of severity, force men into the profession of what they disbelieve; whose zeal for their faith never makes them forget their temper, nor out-run the bounds of christian goodness and prudence; who make great allowances for the weakness of men's reason and the strength of their prejudices; and condemn not all, as insincere, who are not so enlightened as they are: but leave them, to stand or fall, to their own master; praying for them, in the mean time, that they may come to the knowledge of the truth, and endeavouring by all gentle persuasive methods to reclaim them. Finally; they live peaceably, in matters of Common Life and daily practice; who take care, to make their carriage inoffensive and obliging; who are not ready, to entertain ill reports of men, much less to disperse them; who whisper about nothing, to set friends and neighbours at variance; who mind their own business, without intermeddling much in the concerns of others; and who can take a slight affront or injury in conversation without resenting it, and even a great one without returning it.

Men are apt, to go to law for every trifle; and, because they have law on their side, they cannot be persuaded that they are to blame for so doing: but it should be considered, that, although all lawful suits are not sinful; for a Christian may go to law, to keep his rightful possession, or to recover what is wrongfully taken or detained from him; yet, where there is no sin in the suit itself, there is often
in

in the management of it : so that it is a temptation, and a snare ; and every man should be cautious, how he embarks upon so dangerous a bottom ; wherein justice and charity are in danger, of being stranded or thrown overboard. A man at least must be assured, that he claims or defends his right ; otherwise the law-suit is vexatious, or worse. What we propose to get or keep, should be of a considerable value ; else it favours of a contentious spirit, to hazard our own and our neighbour's peace, for a trifle. Victory should not be the motive, but right : Revenge should never mingle with our resentment ; for Christ declares, against this rigour of the Jewish law : and the great springs of law-suits and contentions, such as verbal trespasses and injuries, will very rarely bear the weight of an action, and acquit the conscience of him, who appeals to the laws ; because all our works are to be done in charity.

We must not only say, that we forgive our Enemies ; but shew the reality of our intentions, by taking all opportunities of doing them all the good in our power. It is our duty, to prefer compassion to an enemy, before a matter of mere generosity to a friend, when we cannot exercise both together : the extreme necessity of even our enemies, much more of other persons, is to take place of the mere convenience of friends and relations ; and we ought rather, to relieve the distressed, than to promote the happiness of the easy ; however the practice of it be disregarded by the world : otherwise it may justly be feared, that malice still lurketh in the heart. But he, who fulfils the command of doing good to them that hate him, not only does his duty, and follows the example of our Saviour ; but heaps coals of fire on their heads, to melt them into love and compassion, and consequently to a thorough reconciliation. The great hindrance of the practice of this duty to our neighbour, is that Self-love, which (being an immoderate love of our own worldly interests) is the foundation of all contention and injustice : because we thereby seek, only to please ourselves ; whereas we ought also to please our neighbour.

*Charity to
Enemies.*

*Self love
an hin-
drance to
this cha-
rity.*

bour, for his good to edification ; for even Christ pleased not himself.

To obtain perfect charity, we must not think it the whole of our duty, that this obstacle be removed : because, as every grace is the gift of God, we must pray to him earnestly to work it in us, and send his Spirit to frame our hearts in a meek and peaceable temper.

*And prayer
is a means to
procure it.*

THE THIRD PART .

OF THE NEW

Whole Duty of Man :

CONTAINING

Our DUTY TO OURSELVES.

SUNDAY XIII.

- I. Of SOBRIETY, *consisting in a right Government of our Thoughts.* II. Of Humility, *its necessity and usefulness.* III. Of Pride, *its danger and folly, as it respects the gifts of Nature, Fortune and Grace.* IV. Of Vain-glory, *its danger, folly, and the means to avoid and overcome it.* V. Of Meekness, *its advantages, and the means of obtaining it.* And, VI. Of Consideration, *its benefits ; and of the danger of Inconsideration.*

*Of our duty
to ourselves.*

Of sobriety.

and passions,

WE come now to those duties, which in a particular manner regard OURSELVES, and are summed up by the Apostle in the word SOBERLY. *Soberly* in its native sense, signifies a soundness and firmness of mind ; governing and directing inferior appetites and passions, and searching and regulating the whole frame

frame of soul and body, in our personal and private capacities. Sobriety is the right government of our passions and affections or appetites ; which never can be done, without a previous regulation of our THOUGHTS ; for (as the wise man says) We must keep our hearts with all diligence ; because, out of them are the issues of life. The goodness or badness of our lives doth altogether depend, upon the attending or not attending to the thoughts and motions and inclinations of our minds : it is therefore a very proper question, How a man hath power over his own thoughts ? There is not indeed any single answer to be given to this question, which will fit all men. Some men, by the very principles of their make and constitution, are much better able to govern their thoughts than others ; and some, who are naturally weaker, have, by long use and many trials, obtained a greater power over their thoughts, than others : again, the same persons, who at some times have a greater power over the motions of their minds, may at other times have a less command over them ; and this, according as their health, or their business, or a hundred contingencies of outward things, affect them.

*The govern-
ment of our
Thoughts.*

*What
power we
have o-
ver our
Thoughts.*

In all cases, the *first Motions* of our minds are produced so quick, there is not time enough given, for reason to interpose. Again, when a man's mind is vigorously affected and possessed, either with the outward objects of sense, or with inward passions of any kind ; in that case, he has little or no command of his thoughts : his mind, at that time, will be (in a manner) wholly taken up, with what it is then full of ; nor will he be able, until those impressions are worn off, to think freely of what he would. There are some cases likewise, wherein a man's thoughts are in a manner forced upon him, from the present temper and indisposition of his body ; so that, so long as that habit of body lasts, he cannot avoid that kind of thoughts : this is the case of some deeply hypochondriac persons, many of whom will be haunted with a set of thoughts and fancies, which they can by no means

*Very little
over the
first mo-
tions.*

get rid of, though they desire it ever so earnestly. We may properly enough call these fancies of theirs, waking dreams ; as their dreams are their sleeping fancies.

Though, in many cases, we cannot always think of what we would ; nay, though we cannot hinder abundance of thoughts, coming into our minds against our will ; yet it is always in our power, to assent to our thoughts, or to deny our consent to them : if we do not consent to them, but endeavour to stop, and stifle, and resist them, as soon as we are aware of them ; there is yet no harm done. Should we be haunted with blasphemous thoughts, we cannot get rid of ; we must consider that our thoughts are no farther ours, than as we chuse them ; that all sin lies in the will, and all will implies choice ; and, that those thoughts therefore, which are not our choice, which we reject with a settled aversion and abhorrence, will never be placed to our account : so that our thoughts, how indecent or irregular soever they may be, are rather to be accounted the infirmities of our corrupt nature, than our sins properly so called. If we close with any thought, which prompts us to evil, so as to be pleased with it, to delight in it, to think of pursuing it, until it be brought into action : in that case, we are no longer to plead our original corruption ; for, in that very instant, we become actual sinners, or actual transgressors of the law of God. The mind is passive in receiving its notices of things, whether pure or impure ; but it is active, in its determination, whether to harbour or discard them : as far as it is passive, it is entirely innocent ; as far as it is active, it is accountable ; and it certainly is active, when we dwell upon impure thoughts with complacency ; when we strengthen ourselves in wickedness, by cherishing the remembrance of past guilty joys, and laying scenes in our imagination for the entertainment of future pleasures. Here then we see, in what the government of our thoughts consists : they are not criminal, until they have the consent of the will ; and the soul can withhold that consent, until it have sufficiently considered the whole case.

If we would keep our hearts in a good frame, and order our thoughts to good purposes; our first and greatest care should be, that we rightly pitch upon our main designs; and that we chuse that for the great business of our lives, which really ought to be so. For men's heads are fruitful of evasions, to reconcile their duty and their interest, when they come in competition: and arguments (such as they are) are never wanting, to make that appear reasonable, which is agreeable or profitable to us; except, where the case is very glaring and notorious. He who earnestly wishes, that a thing were lawful, has half consented, that it is so. Dishonesty has already crept into his heart: and the transiſion, from thence to the head, is very quick and sudden. But the greatest concernment of all is, to approve ourselves to that great God; who made us, and disposes of all our affairs; and who (accordingly, as we sincerely endeavour or not endeavour, to serve him) will make us either very happy, or very miserable, both in this life and the other.

The method of governing them.

1. *By bending our thoughts to good purposes.*

2. *By making Religion our chief care.*

They, who would thus keep their hearts always in a good frame, must have a special care to avoid two things; idleness, and loose company. A wise man should never be at such a pass, as to say, 'I have nothing to do; I do not know, how to spend my next hour:' Idleness, and having nothing to do, is the mother of most of those vain, unprofitable, and sinful fancies, in which some men spend their days; and whereas temptations now-and-then come in the way of other men, the idle man is forced to seek out temptations, for the shipwreck of his virtue. Loose and impertinent conversation is not much better, than idleness: for, wherever it is much used, it will so emasculate a man's mind, and take off the edge and vigour of it, as to serious things, that he cannot easily get it into a good frame again. Evil communications (saith St. Paul) corrupt good manners: when a great part of a man's life is spent in gadding up and down, in play, in merry meetings, in telling or hearing idle stories, and the like; it is impossible, but his thoughts and inclinations,

3. *By avoiding Idleness and bad Company.*

inclinations, and the whole frame of his heart should be suitable ; that is to say, very frothy, very light and foolish ; not to say profane, and wicked, and atheistical too ; especially, if the company, he much converses with, be of that strain.

Let us be as attentive as possible, to the first motions of our minds ; and, whenever we find that they tend towards something forbidden, let us stop them as soon as we can. You cannot, (perhaps) prevent a sudden passion of anger, rising in your mind upon twenty accidents ; but, as soon as you feel this passion, you can thus far stifle it ; you can seal up your lips, so that the passion shall not vent itself in unseemly words : should any indecent fancies or impure desires, on any occasion, be excited in you, it may not (perhaps) be in your power, to keep them from coming into your mind ; but it is in your power, to withdraw from the temptation which causeth them, and to endeavour to direct your thoughts to some other object ; at least, not to proceed one step in any outward action, towards the accomplishing of those desires. Every check you give the first motions of sin, makes the next assault of it the less furious : and, if you constantly use yourself, thus to guard and watch over your hear, you will in time obtain such a command over them, that you will not be troubled with a quarter of those irregular desires and passions, which heretofore upon several occasions used to be kindled in you. That you may be able, not only to keep evil desires out of your mind, but also to have a constant spring of good thoughts ; converse with discreet and pious persons ; read good books, especially the holy scriptures ; take times of meditation and recollection ; and, above all, offer fervent and constant prayers to God.

Notwithstanding what I have hitherto said, concerning the diligence, with which we are to keep our
 5. *By Discretion.* hearts ; yet this is always to be remembered, that with our diligence we must be careful to join discretion : my meaning is this ; we must have a care not to extend our thoughts immoderately, and more than our tempers will bear, even to the best things. The way to do that is, not to put them too much, or too long,

long, upon the stretch at any one time; but to relax them when there is occasion; and to let them run out, and entertain themselves, upon any thing next to hand, so long as it is innocent.

Another excellent rule, for the good government of our thoughts, is, to live under a constant sense of God's presence and inspection. He, that *And, 6. By living under a sense of God's presence.* made the eye, shall he not see? And, if he do see, shall he not punish? Hell and destruction are before the Lord! How much more then are the hearts of the children of men?

And, if it be so much shame, to disclose our wicked, presumptuous, vain, trifling, and vicious thoughts to our fellow creatures, as most men account it to be, lest they upbraid or punish them for it; how much more should they be ashamed, and dread to admit such thoughts which are criminal in the sight of God, when they believe he sees and is able to punish them?

II. Above all things, it will be found of exceeding great use, to be clothed with HUMILITY: *Of Humility.* not that fawning humility of outward expression and behaviour, which covers a false and proud heart; but that humility, which consists in the inward frame and disposition of the mind, and in a right judgment (in the main) of ourselves: a humility, which retains a deep sense, that God created us out of nothing, and that sin reduced us to a state worse than nothing, without the mercies of God and the merits of our Saviour; and which admonisheth a man, of his own corruption and subordination, and of his duty to God and Man.

The fruits of humility are to be discerned best in a relative view. With regard to superiors, in civil stations in the world; true humility consists, in obeying them willingly in all things just and lawful; *Humility towards Superiors and Equals.* in submitting to the authority, even of the froward and unworthy; in not despising their persons, exposing their weaknesses, or insulting over their infirmities. With regard to superiors in natural abilities; true humility consists, not in submitting our understandings to them, blindly and implicitly; but in being willing and desirous, to be instructed and informed by them: in not envying them the advantages,

God has given them above ourselves; nor repining, but on the contrary rejoicing, at their being preferred or honoured, according to the proportion of their true merit or capacity. With regard to superiors, in religious improvements; humility consists likewise in rejoicing to see the practice of virtue, and the advancement of the kingdom of God upon earth: not grieving, but taking pleasure, to find such persons highly esteemed in the world; and proposing them to ourselves, as examples and patterns for imitation. With regard to our equals, true humility consists in civil and affable, in courteous and modest behaviour; patiently permitting our equals (when it shall so happen) to be preferred before us: not thinking ourselves injured, when others but of equal merit chance to be more esteemed; willingly submitting, for peace sake, to many things, if not very unreasonable; though otherwise such, as in our own judgment we should not chuse to think best of.

With regard to our inferiors, humility consists, in assuming to ourselves no more than the difference of men's circumstances, and the performance of their respective duties, for preserving the regularity and good order of the world, necessarily required. With regard to inferiors, in natural abilities, or accidental advantages in the world, such as learning and knowledge, riches, plenty, and the like; humility consists in considering, that possibly they have some other gifts, which may be wanting in us; and in being willing to communicate to them the advantages we enjoy, that they may be the better for the things, wherewith God hath blessed us. The true humility of a rich man consists, in being willing to assist them, by relieving their necessities, endeavouring to make the condition of the meanest easy and supportable to themselves; and, in like manner, the true humility of persons, endued with more learning and knowledge than others, consists in being willing to communicate, what they know; and in sincerely desiring that all others may attain the same knowledge with themselves. Towards our inferiors, in respect of religious improvements; true humility consists in being rightly sensible of our own many infirmities, even those of us, who may be apt to imagine ourselves to have made the greatest improvements; and in being sincerely solicitous,

rous, for the welfare and the salvation of all men: it consists, in endeavouring to influence men towards religion, by meekness rather than by power; in not affecting, to gain the empty applause of men, by an outward ostentation of greater piety than others: in condescending to those beneath us, and not disdaining even to yield to them in indifferent things; in bearing their infirmities, patiently and without frowardness; in forbearing to judge or despise those, who differ from us in opinion: in taking care not to offend, by haughty and presumptuous behaviour, such persons as by meekness might be prevailed upon to believe in Christ; or such, as by kind treatment might be kept from departing into divisions: in taking heed not to impose needless difficulties upon those under our power; for so our Saviour describes the pride of the Pharisees. Finally it consists in using great gentleness, even to those, who have offended: 'Brethren, (saith the Apostle) if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.'

Without practising it towards superiors, there can be no government; without exercising it towards equals, there can be no friendship and mutual charity: and, with regard to inferiors; there are proper arguments to deter us from pride, upon account of every particular advantage we may seem to have over others; whether in respect of our civil stations in the world, or of our natural abilities, or of our religious improvements. Humility therefore will keep us from despising any, and incline us to learn all we can: not to set any value upon knowledge, not attended with a suitable practice; to regard all mankind as our fellow-creatures, and esteem them as God has appointed; and to acknowledge, that, by the law of our creation, we cannot comfortably subsist independent of our fellows. Humility thus tempered will dispose a man, to the chearful performance of the duties of humanity to all men: if they be above him, he will chearfully render them their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour: and, if he stand in a superior rank, he will readily condescend to men of low estate.

*Its necessity
and use.*

It is as great a contradiction to say, any one is a proud Christian, as it would be to say such a one is a wicked Saint. All the gospel, its precepts, its great examples, its glorious prospects, tend to humble the pride of man; and whoever will come after Christ, must, in this respect, deny himself. It is possible, we may obtain the character of humble people with men, from a modest outside, and negligence of garb, a condescending carriage, and lowly speeches; while God, who searcheth the heart, may see pride reigning there, under these disguises; and that such plausible appearances are intended, to support a haughty and overbearing heart. No single branch of goodness therefore deserves more attention, to judge of the state of our souls, than humility; if we grow in knowledge, and be puffed up with pride; we lose more in goodness, than we gain in profit; if we improve in other excellencies, and exceed in the conceit of ourselves; we make those things nothing in the sight of God, which would otherwise become valuable, offered up to him, by an humble, lowly, and meek spirit.

Knowledge puffeth up; and he never knew himself rightly, who never suspected himself. We seldom have that charity which covers a multitude of faults in our neighbours; and we much seldomer want that self-love, which covers a multitude of faults in ourselves; many would sooner bear a reflection upon their morals, than upon their understanding. The serpent was early sensible, this was man's weak side; when he used that artifice, to seduce our first parents: 'If they would follow his counsel, they should be as Gods, knowing good and evil:' the deceiver gained his point: man fell into disgrace, with his God; and not only propagated sin and death to his posterity, but (as a peculiar legacy) he seems to have filled them with a vain conceit, that they enjoy that knowledge, which was then promised by the devil. Under this strong delusion, no branch of pride more needs a curb, though none hath less to support it, than conceit of our own abilities; to moderate which, we must endeavour to attain a sense of the imperfection of our nature. It is true, there is a dignity in our nature, in comparison of the lower creation: but the

the faculties given us are limited at the best ; and many things are above them, which we cannot grasp ; things too wonderful for us, and not to be attained by us.

To an humble mind, God's word is a sufficient reason of faith ; which should teach us, not to be wise, above what is written in matters of pure revelation ; not to venture to publish our own inventions, to account how such things

*The Curb of
Self-con-
ceit.*

are ; nor to be positive in them : because such things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God, any farther, than he has been pleased to make them known by his word : this will make us confess our own liableness to mistake, even where we think we have formed a right judgment. In considering the power of prejudice, our readiness to make hasty judgments ; and the plausible colours, which may be put upon error ; we have reason, in most judgments we form, to keep this cautionary thought ; ' It is possible, we may be overseen.' There is no person, but must confess, he hath actually been mistaken in former judgments ; even in some, where he was very positive and sure : which is a good reason, why we should carry the thought of our fallibility about with us, in other cases. We should also retain a moderate apprehension of our knowledge, when we compare it with the attainments of others. It is true, every good man judges himself in the right, in every sentiment he maintains ; for, were he convinced it was an error, he would give it up : it follows therefore, that he thinks those of a contrary judgment mistaken, as long as he judges himself in the right ; yet this should not puff him up, above measure. He only judges his own knowledge superior to those, with whom he compares his own ; but at the same time confesses, that in this life we all know but in part : and so, though some know less, others know more than himself : though he may be better acquainted with some particulars, yet he grants, that others may exceed in other parts of learning ; that he may have made less improvement of greater advantages, than they have made of fewer opportunities ; and that he owes it, more to the providence or grace of God, than to himself, that he is distinguished from the most stupid and ignorant.

None are so apt, to run into gross mistakes and infirmities, or so hard to be made sensible of them; as he, who over-values his own parts and wisdom. He who hath no patience to examine any thing justly, counts it a disparagement, to suspend his judgment; he understands all things at first sight, and by instinct: if he judges rightly, he hath good fortune; but if not; it is impossible to convince or reclaim him: for he is impatient of opposition, disdains counsel, and cannot bear the least contradiction, or endure to be gainsaid; he scorns all instruction and rebuke, and takes it for an affront, if you yield not to him in every thing he advances; and so swelled with an over-weening esteem of his own abilities, never so much as once dreams, that it is possible, he may be deceived and deluded. 'Seest thou a man, wise in his own conceit; there is more hope of a fool (saith the Wise man) than of him.' Finally, this self conceit hardens a man in his sins, and makes him deaf to instructions; whilst he thinks thus of himself, that even his defects are beauties; and he can excuse, if not commend, his own ugliness.

SUNDAY XIII. PART II.

III. Opposite to humility, is the sin of PRIDE. Pride is that weakness of the human heart, which inclines us to think too highly of ourselves: it is an over-weening conceit of our dignity, founded upon some real or imaginary superiority over our neighbours; a sin, which men readily condemn in others, and easily excuse in themselves, through self-conceit, or an opinion of their own wisdom: for, if we would examine the innermost recesses of the mind, I doubt, we should often find; that our own pride is the cause of our taxing others with it. Men, elate with the thoughts of their own sufficiency, are ever imagining, that others are wanting in their regard to them; and are therefore very apt to conclude, that pride must be the cause, of their with-holding from them that respect; to which, in their own opinion, they have an unquestionable right: hence their character seldom escapes the brand of vanity, who have the fortune to be posselt of those accomplishments, which

which would make their detractors vain : we cannot endure any one, to lay down, usurp, or force customs, humours, or manners ; as if we had no judgment of our own, to govern and order our own affairs.

Pride springs, from a partial view of ourselves ; a view of the bright side of ourselves, without ballancing against it our numerous imperfections and defects ; how little good we can perform, without the grace of God : and how little we actually do perform, even with it : and yet many, who call this pride in another, presume themselves wise enough, to set patterns or give laws to every body else. *The danger and folly of Pride.*

Pride makes men foolish, and void of caution ; and this puts them upon doing things, which brings them to dishonour : it makes men negligent, and improvident of the future ; and this often throws them into sudden calamities : it makes men rash and peevish, obstinate and insolent. Other men's follies and vices are always insupportable to those, who are entirely devoted to their own : the fuller of imperfections any man is, the less able he is, to bear with the imperfections of his fellow-creatures ; and this seldom fails to bring down ruin upon himself ; it involves men perpetually, in strifes and contentions ; and these always multiply sin, and are inconsistent with true happiness ; it disoblige men's best friends, and gives their enemies perpetual advantages over them ; and this often draws great inconveniencies upon them : it makes men vain, and lovers of flattery ; rejecting those about them, who would do them most kindness ; and liking those best, who do them the greatest injury ; and this causes them to be insensible of their own disease, until they suddenly fall under contempt ; it makes men impatient of good advice and instruction, and that renders them incorrigible in their vices ; it fills men full of vain-glorious designs, employing all their thoughts in self-confident imaginations ; and this makes men incapable of religious improvements, and to have no relish of true wisdom.

Pride also makes men quarrel with God and his worship. Every objection, against the being of a deity and providence, is raised by pride, and an arrogant opinion of our own understanding ; as if nothing could be true or reason-

Pride destructive of Religion.

able,

able, but what is within our sight and penetration. Pride is that ruling quality, which, of all others, seems to take the fastest hold of us. 'Proud and haughty 'Scorner is his name,' says Solomon. A Proud man is very hardly brought, to digest the humble duties of the cross, or to admit a belief of the mysteries of christianity: the one is too low for him, and he

The character of a Scorer, or Free-thinker. cannot stoop to the practice of them; the other too high for his understanding, and he desires to be excused from entertaining

any proposition as true, which he does not perfectly comprehend. If he cannot give himself a certain plain account, in what manner, and to what end, God did a thing; he wisely resolves, that therefore he did it not at all: if he have not as clear an idea of every term in an article of faith, as he has of those in a mathematical proposition; it is presently unphilosophical, absurd, and foolish; invented by those, whose interest it is to puzzle men's understandings, that they may have their wills and affections at their service. The proud man pretends to see, that some (who set up for greater purity, and a demurer shew and face of religion, than their neighbours) are really counterfeits, and mean nothing at the bottom, but their own interest; and therefore wisely resolves upon this, that all religion is like theirs, a convenient trick and pretence only, invented by cunning men, to keep silly people in awe, to make princes reign safely, and the priesthood live easily: but, as for himself, he knows better things, than to fall in with the herd, and to give himself up, to be ridden by the tribe of Levi; the poorest and most contemptible tribe of the twelve; which had no lot, no inheritance, among their brethren; but lived upon the cheat of sacrifices and offerings, and upon driving a gainful traffick for the good things of this world, here paid down to them, by promising and preaching up (to those they dealt with) a recompence in a world to come. Then he openly sets up, for proselytes and a party; runs down all religion, and laughs piety and virtue out of countenance: a good and honest man is sure to be his mark, wheresoever he finds him; and he is ever shooting arrows against him, even bitter words. When such persons cannot apprehend

prehend the usefulness of any part of the creation; when any thing happens, which seems confused and disorder'd; when their wisdom cannot discern the end, benefit, and design of every thing: presently they charge God, with folly and ill-contrivance; or banish him out of the world, and impute all, to blind chance or unavoidable fate.

Indeed to be cautious and upon our guard, in receiving doctrines; and not easily to give up our assent, to every tale that is told us, is a point of great prudence, and very requisite in such a multiplicity of opinions as there is in the world, to preserve us from error: but then, we may carry this point too far: we may be so scrupulous and circumspect, in admitting the testimonies of men, as to reject some good witnesses among several bad ones; and to deceive ourselves oftentimes, for very fear of being deceived by others. A general undistinguishing suspicion is altogether as apt to mislead a man, as a too easy and unwary credulity; and to this excess a proud Scornor is naturally inclined: he is so possess'd with the notion of priestcraft and pious frauds, as to apply it indifferently to all religions, and to every thing in religion; he is so afraid, of having his understanding impos'd upon in matters of faith, that he stands equally aloof from all propositions of that kind, whether true or false: which is, as if a man should refuse to receive any money at all, because there is a great deal going about, which is false and counterfeit; or resolve not to make a friendship or acquaintance with any man, because many men are not to be trusted. Certainly this is a very great instance of folly; and, in what breast soever it harbours, cannot but indispose a man extremely for the study and attainment of religious wisdom. An extremity of suspicion, in an enquirer after truth, is like a raging jealousy in an husband, or a friend: it leads a man, to turn all his thoughts towards the ill-natur'd side, and to put the worst construction upon every thing; and (in consequence of that) for once that he is really in the right, in his guesses and censures, to be very often and very much in the wrong.

The Scornor's Folly.

Debates proceed from pride. Whilst men too highly value their own private judgments in things doubtful and indifferent; they think meanly of the determinations of their superiors; and will rather sacrifice peace and charity, than give up any trifling opinion they happen to espouse: but there will be no end of disputes, until we be brought to think, that governors may be wiser, and know better, than we, what is fit and decent for the public good. Therefore no man ought to make himself the standard of wisdom, nor expect that all should yield to his humours, and deny their own inclinations, that they may gratify his: on the contrary, what is more graceful and lovely, and more charming, than humility and modesty, a mean estimation of ourselves, and a willingness to yield and condescend? Does it not render us acceptable, both to God and men? Does it not carry a singular agreeableness in itself? Though humility may seem, to expose a man to some contempt; yet it is truly the readiest way to honour; as, on the contrary, pride is the most improper and absurd means, of accomplishing the end at which it aims. All other vices do in some measure attain their end; covetousness does usually raise an estate, and ambitious endeavours often advance men to high places: but pride and insolence, and contempt of others, do certainly defeat their own projects. When the proud man aims at respect and esteem, he never attains it; for all mankind do naturally hate and slight him: again, a proud and conceited temper of mind is very likely to run into mistakes; because pride and fulness of a man's self do keep out knowledge, and stop all the passages, by which wisdom and instruction should enter into men: besides it provokes God, to be their enemy, to abandon men to their own follies and mistakes, and to pursue them with extraordinary punishments in this or the next world; for pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall: and again, every one that is proud in heart shall not be unpunished; for God resisteth the proud; but the meek will he guide in judgment, and will give more grace and wisdom to the humble.

The way to avoid pride, and to attain to humility, is
to

to remember, that all the advantages we enjoy, either of body or mind, above others, are not the effect of our merit, but of God's bounty; that those, whom we are apt to contemn, are valuable in the sight of God, the only fountain of true honour; that, by having consented to sin, we have committed the most shameful action imaginable, the most contrary to justice and right reason, and to all sorts of decency; and that, as long as we are clothed with flesh and blood, we are still liable to the same offences against the majesty of Heaven. We must suppress all proud and vain thoughts, when they first arise in our minds; and especially never suffer them, to take possession of our imagination; but keep a constant watch over our words and actions, that we may check the first inclinations to pride and vain glory.

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Humility.*

Whoever does not thus watch over his own heart, will be in danger of falling into this sin: because, though God is so good, as to bear with him for a while in his folly: he never thinks of repentance; but, mistaking his forbearance, has the vanity to esteem himself a favourite of God: and when at last he is corrected, by any manner of punishment, from God or man; he is so far from considering its justice and necessity, and his own just deserts; that he murmurs against God, and breathes out his blasphemous hatred against his divine justice; and consequently becomes much more reproachful to his neighbour, who shall attempt by any means to draw him to a true knowledge of himself. Whereas he, who is of a calm and meek temper, is always ready to receive the truth, and holds the balance of his judgment even: but passion sways and inclines it one way, and that commonly against reason and truth; so that pride is a great hindrance to knowledge, and the very worst quality a learner can have: it makes men refuse instruction, out of a conceit, that they are in no need thereof; and the sufficiency of their knowledge has hindered many, from what they might have known.

*The abuse
of God's
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The folly of this sin appears, in that we very frequently

The Folly of pride. ly value ourselves upon things, which add no true worth to us; which make us, neither better, nor wiser; which are, in their own nature, perishable; and of which we are not owners, but stewards: nay; if the things be valuable in themselves, they are God's immediate work in us; and to be proud of them, is the surest way to lose them. But the folly of pride will appear more glaring, if we consider the three things, whereof men are apt to be proud; the goods of Nature, of Fortune, and of Grace.

In respect of the goods of Nature. The goods of Nature are beauty, strength, wit, and the like. Now the folly, of being proud of any of these, is very great: for, though we really have them (wherein we are often apt to be mistaken) they are, most of them, possessed by other creatures, in a greater degree. The white and red of the most celebrated beauty is far surpass'd, by the whiteness of the lily, and redness of the rose; the greatest strength and swiftness of man is greatly exceeded, by the strength and swiftness of many other creatures: neither are they at all durable; phrensy or sickness may, and old age certainly will, destroy them. Besides, whatever they be, we give them not to ourselves; but receive them from the hands of God.

The goods of Fortune. As for the goods of Fortune, which are wealth, honour, and the like; we have no reason, to be proud of them; because they add no true worth to a man, and are in their nature perishable: besides, we have them, but as stewards; and they are not owing to ourselves: if they be lawfully gotten, it is by God's blessing: but, if unlawfully, we have them on such terms, that we have no reason to boast of them. Are we proud of riches? Riches cannot alter the nature of things; they cannot make a man worthy, who is worthless in himself: the value of the estate may be very great, but that of the man is not at all greater; if he employ not his estate, to procure moral pleasures, and to do benevolent offices. The judicious should consider things intrinsically; and should think him the greatest, who strives to make others, as much as in him lies, happy by his benevolence, good by his example, and wise by his instructions.

Lastly, As to the goods of Grace, which are those virtues men are endowed with ; it is a great folly, to be proud of them : for, though they be things in themselves truly valuable ; yet they are God's immediate gifts to us ; and to be proud of them, is the surest way to lose them ; and the consequence of such a loss is no less, than eternal punishment.

IV. VAIN-GLORY (which is an eager desire of the applause of men) is another sin opposite to Humility ; a sin, which prevents the admission of Christ into the heart ; and consequently sets us in the utmost danger : for all our safety and hope of salvation depends upon our being one with Christ and Christ with us. Besides, this sin is the high road to many more : for he, who is resolved to court the praise of men at all adventures, will never scruple to commit the greatest sins, when they are in fashion, or are supposed in any wise to contribute to gratify his vain-glory. Yet this little air (which is no more, than a blast or the breath of men) yields no real advantage : it is no proof of my wisdom and goodness, that another tells me, I am wise and good ; which if he tells me to my face, I am an arrant fool, for being pleased at it ; because it may be flattery : and there is as much folly, in being pleased, when applauded behind my back ; because it neither brings me pleasure nor profit. He, who so eagerly pursues praise, as to reject the dictates of reason and conscience ; and only takes care, to do what may raise his esteem among men ; yields himself a slave to every flattering and deceitful tongue, and reaps to himself a painful and uneasy mind ; which pain and uneasiness is much encreased, by the disturbances, disquietudes, and tortures of mind, they are under, who instead of praise meet with unexpected reproach. If we look upon this sin in a christian sense, it will be found destructive, of our prayers, almsgiving, and every good work : they, who do good only to be seen of men, must expect no other reward, than the portion of those hypocrites ; who love the praise of men, more than the praise of God : a folly of so high a degree, as not only to deprive us of eternal joy, but hurry us into endless miseries. If we consider Vain-glory,

The goods of Grace.

The sin of Vain glory.

Danger.

Folly.

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in regard to some indifferent actions ; we shall be convinced, it not only endangers our eternal state, but brings upon us the scorn and contempt of the wise and virtuous in this life ; which must eclipse all other actions, be they ever so deserving of praise.

To avoid this sin of Vain-glory, examine carefully whether thou hast done any christian duty, for the sake of human applause ; and check and resist every too eager desire thereof, in thy most indifferent actions. But above all, let duty be the motive ; and let reason always direct thee to please God (who is able to reward thee) rather than man, from whose applause thou never canst reap any real good : let not thy heart be too much exalted, even at the just praise of thy virtues ; because, as they are the gift of God, their glory belongs to him alone : as for the praise, given to indifferent and bad actions, the too common subjects of worldly praise ; the former, having no goodness in them, deserve no commendation ; and our bad actions should make us tremble, and constant in prayer, lest we thereby incur that woe, which our Saviour pronounces against all such, as make sin the subject of their glory : ‘ Woe unto you, when men speak well of you ; for so did their fathers, to the false prophets !’ A total self-loathing (however) would be as great a fault, as a clear and unmixed self-liking ; it would deaden all the powers of the soul, and sink it into a state of inaction ; there is a medium, between a just sense of our abilities, and an exorbitant opinion of them. A just consciousness of those talents, with which God hath entrusted us, will give life and spirit to our undertakings ; and be a powerful motive to those actions, which may make us truly glorious : modesty and discretion will be a bar, to those attempts ; which, being above our sphere, may make us ridiculous.

V. The next christian virtue is MEEKNESS ; which implies a calmness and quiet steadiness of mind, and a chearful and absolute resignation to God’s providence, in opposition to fretfulness and murmuring against his appointments. God may allow the complaints of nature, under our burdens and exercises ;

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gainst Vain-
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exercises; yet he expects, we should check and suppress all complaints of him, and every impeachment of his justice, wisdom, and goodness in his works. Wherefore the meek exercise themselves, in a careful restraint and regulation of their passions, reducing them within the bounds of reason and religion; are of a sweet, courteous, and obliging carriage; and will not take offence hastily and without just reason; but be careful, that they be not angry without a cause: neither will they rashly suppose, that a provocation is meant; nor judge by appearances. There may be the aspect, and yet no design, of an affront or prejudice; but, what was not ill-intended, should never be ill-taken: therefore we should not give way to suspicions, which cannot be supported with evidence, but put the best construction upon words or actions. Check all resentment, until the grounds for it be well considered: such a precaution would prevent much passion. Again, meekness will not resent higher, than the merit of the offence given; for (supposing a real and great provocation) a meek man will keep a strict guard upon his own spirit, that his mind be not enflamed by ill-usage, nor other men's sins draw him in to speak unadvisedly with his lips: it will make us careful, not to render railing for railing, but to break the force of unreasonable anger by gentle answers; for moderate replies turn away wrath; it will also avoid rough methods, to right ourselves even from considerable injuries: it will dispose us, to try the mildest ways first; to try argument before punishment, conference before law, and private admonition before we make a public example of our neighbour. When at last our own security, or the common good, shall determine us to seek public justice against any one; meekness directs, that it should be done without hatred; and merely with a view to reach those ends, which are lawful and commendable.

The advantages of Meekness are many and great: by it we shall be kept in a readiness to be reconciled, when an offence is acknowledged, and reasonable satisfaction tendered; and, if our neighbour persist in his ill mind, meekness will guard us against all malice, and make us ready to help the worst enemy in the common offices of life, and heartily

The advantages of Meekness.

heartily pray for him, especially for his repentance unto salvation: it will teach us, so to moderate our affections and passions, as not willingly to give offence; not to be overbearing in company, nor full of ourselves, to the neglect of others; but to express civility to all, agreeable to their stations; and this out of a sense of our duty to God, and love to one another. Such, as are in any station of inferiority, will be disposed by this, contentedly to submit to the duties thereof: and the same excellent spirit will form persons in superior relations, to a lowly and condescending temper; a temper, to which Christ has added a blessing having promised, that the meek shall inherit the earth: meekness preserves a man from danger; and (while unbridled passions tend, to make all about us our enemies) they must be of a very brutish nature indeed, who will be outrageous against a man, who studies to walk harmless and blameless, and to give no offence. At least the meek will be free from those vexations and troubles of life, which the hasty and froward bring upon themselves, as the fruits of their own ill behaviour: and forasmuch, as God's providence and promises secure to them as many good things of the earth, as shall be for their real welfare; so, if they meet with unjust and ungrateful returns, they may confidently rely upon God, as their protector and avenger; who is ready to rise up to judgment, to save the meek of the earth. So, whether they have a large or less share of outward good, they are prepared by the mastery of their passions, to enjoy more comfort in what they possess; than those, who interrupt their enjoyment by the tumults of their own thoughts.

Let us therefore persuade ourselves, to seek after meekness, in opposition to the folly and danger of anger; and to look upon it, as a matter of necessity, that meekness should ordinarily have dominion over passion and pride. There may be much difficulty in it: but by keeping a careful guard upon our hearts, and observing the beginning of anger in ourselves, we may at last be able to gain the victory; for, it is much easier, to extinguish the fire of passion in the first sparks, than when it is gotten a-head. Let us fix it as a law to ourselves,

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to make a short pause upon the first rise of resentment : this will stifle most passions. To lower our inordinate esteem of ourselves, and of this world and its affairs ; would also go a great way, in removing the fuel of passion and pride : and to think often of our own frailty and liableness to offend, and how many indiscretions and weaknesses others have to bear with in us : would cherish in us the spirit of meekness ; considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted. We should often remember also the indecencies and ill effects of passion : a man, in a transport of passion, appears (in every eye but his own) to be in a fit of madness : but the censure of others is the glass, in which we should see our own face.

The mischiefs which passion produces in the world, are innumerable ; the sins it causeth, are intolerable ; and the shame and sorrow for our past follies, which attack us in our cooler hours, are most tiresome. He, who hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city, that is broken down and without walls : a city in this condition will be at all times liable, to be entered by an army ; and as long as we live in this world, there will be provocations and temptations to lust, there will be envy and revenge, there will be crosses and disappointments, there will be doubtful and suspected sayings ; there will be fuel for our passions, administered in great abundance, wherever we converse or have any business to transact : besides the uneasiness they give the mind, the passions seldom fail, to shake the constitution of the body, waste the flesh, sour the blood, and poison the spirits ; and, by that means, impair the health, bring on diseases, and shorten the course of man's life. The sad consideration of all is ; that, by the influence of these, we contract a vast heap of guilt, and are liable to the angry justice of God ; whose authority we all the while contemn, and whose justice and holy precepts we break. Consequently meekness, and patience, and humility, and modesty, and such virtues of christianity, do not in reason tend to dispirit men, and break their true courage ; but to regulate it, and take away its fierceness and brutality. Experience teacheth that men of the truest

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truest courage have many times the least, of pride and insolence, of passion and fierceness; when they are swayed, by the principles of the gospel: such therefore, as by nature have a stronger proneness, than others, to be warm or peevish, should know, that the duty of meekness is of perpetual obligation: though it be difficult, to govern the passions; yet it is absolutely necessary, in the christian religion. The hasty and passionate should therefore take the more pains, with their own hearts; and be the more earnest in prayer to God, for his assistance: their distemper is not incurable by the heavenly physician: and they will have one pleasure upon a conquest, above those of milder tempers; it will be more evident, that their meekness is not forced. If we consult reason, we must confess; that, when evil consequences may be foreseen, they should have fortified us against the tide of passion; not passion be made use of afterwards, as a plea for its excuse: a sincere christian will rather consider those effects of his passion, as aggravations of the sinfulness of it; and therefore be more watchful for the future, and diligent to grow in meekness; which will be a preparation for heaven, where neither pride nor passion have any place, but all is calm and serene, peaceable, meek, and happy.

VI. CONSIDERATION is a duty we owe to our souls, by which our state and actions may be preserved from evil. *Of Consideration.* Consideration deters a man from all rash undertakings; making him weigh the matter well, before he fixes any resolution: it prompts us to chuse and pursue, what the understanding represents as good, and advantageous to us; and to shun and avoid, what is represented, as evil, and destructive to eternal happiness. It teaches us, not to rest upon a bare faith, that Christ died for our sins; or a presumption, that we are of the number of God's elect, and are decreed to salvation; which is rather the phrensy of a distempered brain, than the effects of rational judgment, founded on the word of God: and it will call us, to the law and the covenant, by which we are to be tried at the last day; and will convince us, that our faith and our hopes are all vain, if not strictly conformable to the

the gospel of Christ; by which we are taught, that whoever continues in the practice of any one sin, in defiance of God's commands, cannot ever hope to find mercy, without timely repentance.

Seeing then, our life is no more, than a gust of breath in our nostrils; we cannot reasonably suppose ourselves, to be in the favour of God, until we be sensible of our own weak and momentary state; and be thoroughly persuaded of the necessity, of exercising ourselves in holy affections; in love and desire, of what is good; in hatred and detestation, of what is evil; in sorrow, shame, and self-abhorrence, for having transgressed in any particular; in praise and thanksgiving, for having been enabled (in any tolerable measure) to have done our duty; in adoration and imitation; in faith, hope, and charity; and in resignation of ourselves to the Almighty. Would men frequently meditate, upon death and judgment; would they represent to their minds, what a vast disproportion there is, betwixt time and eternity; would they consider, that the pleasures of sin are (at best) but for a season, but that its punishment is endless and intolerable: could men be brought, to think of these things with any seriousness; such thoughts in time would have their proper effect, and so effectually convince them of the great folly and danger of sin, as to make them in good earnest set about the great work of their salvation. Consideration hath an universal influence, upon the whole life of a christian; is an admirable instrument, to quicken our progress in all the graces of the Holy Ghost; illuminates our understanding, with the knowledge of our duty; and stores our memory, with all such arguments, as are proper to excite us to the performance thereof: it habituates our minds, to spiritual objects; and raises them, above the perishing things of this world; it strengthens our holy purposes, arms us against temptations; and enflames all the faculties of our souls, with earnest desires of attaining and enjoying our chiefest happiness.

The good effects of Consideration.

The want of Consideration is the cause, that men stupidly

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sideration.*

pidly go on in an evil way, and are not sensible of the danger of their present course; because they do not attend, to the consequences of it: for, certainly, if men would seriously consider, what sin is, and what shall be the sad portion of sinners hereafter; they would resolve upon a better course of life. Can it be thought, any man would live in the lusts of the flesh and of intemperance, or out of covetousness defraud or oppress his neighbour; did he seriously consider, that God is the avenger of such? In most men, it is not so much a positive disbelief of the truth, as inadvertency and want of consideration, makes them go on so securely in a sinful state; consequently, would men consider, what sin is; and what will be the fearful consequence of it, probably in this world, but most certainly in the other; they would undoubtedly flee from it, as the greatest evil that can befall them.

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Considera-
tion.*

*Our Acti-
ons before
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The subjects of our consideration, are our own Actions; both before we do them, and after they are done. Would men but take a serious and impartial view of their lives and actions; would they but consider the tendency of a sinful course, and whither it will bring them at last: would the vicious and dissolute man but look about him and consider, how many have been ruined in the very way he is in, how many lie slain and wounded in it; that it is the way to hell, and leads down to the chambers of death: the serious thought of this could not but check him in his course, and make him resolve upon a better life for the future. It is a desperate folly in mankind, that they seldom think seriously of the consequence of their actions; and least of all, of such, as are of concernment to them, and have the chief Influence upon their eternal state; it is a most dangerous folly, not to consider, into what mischief and inconveniency a wicked life may plunge them in this world; what trouble and disturbance it may give them, when they come to die; what horror and confusion it may fill them withal, when they are leaving this world, and passing into eternity; and what

what intolerable misery and torment it may bring upon them for ever. Would men but let their thoughts dwell upon these things ; it is not to be supposed the generality could lead such profane and impious, such lewd and dissolute, such secure and careless lives, as they do, without thought or remorse : but whether we consider it or not, our latter end will come ; and all those dismal consequences of a sinful course (which God has so plainly threatened, and our own consciences do so much dread) will certainly overtake us at last ; and they cannot be avoided, nor prevented, by not thinking of these things. Nothing is more certain, than death and judgment ; and then an irreversible sentence will pass upon us, according to all the evil we have done, and all the good we have neglected to do in this life ; under the heavy weight and pressure whereof, we must lie, groaning and bewailing ourselves for ever.

By the consequences of our actions, when they are past, we may judge, whether they be good, and according to the rules of the gospel. *Our Actions after they are done.* Such a recollection is of great comfort and advantage : if they appear to be good, they become the subject of our joy ; if they be found to be evil, they call us to immediate repentance, and thankfulness to God, who gives us time to reconcile ourselves to his favour.

How great then is the use of Consideration ! As every sin must be particularly repented of, before it can be pardoned ; so the oftener we call our actions to mind, the better we shall be able to find them out, and repent, and resolve against the like for the future. Let him therefore, who dares to put off his duty, and lie down to sleep before he has done it ; let him remember that dreadful voice, ' Thou fool, thy soul shall be required of thee this night ! ' What then will become of the unrepenting sinner ?

Q

SUNDAY

SUNDAY XIV.

I. *Of Contentedness, including its contraries, murmuring, ambition, covetousness, envy.* II. *Helps to, and the necessity of Contentedness.* III. *Of Watchfulness against sin; which includes Industry, in improving the gifts of nature, fortune and grace: the danger of Idleness, especially in tradesmen and servants.* IV. *Of the power the Devil has to tempt mankind, and the means to conquer temptations.* V. *Of those duties, which concern our bodies; as Chastity, including the several degrees and sin of uncleanness: of Fornication, and of its mischiefs both to soul and body.* VI. *Helps to Chastity, and means to avoid uncleanness.*

I. **A** Nother great proof, of our obedience and resignation to the will of God, is **CONTENTEDNESS** or contentment. Contentment is such an *Contented-* acquiescence of the mind, in the portion of *ness.* outward things we possess, upon a persuasion of its being sufficient for us; as makes us well pleased with the condition we are in, and suffers not the desire of any change, or of any particular thing we have not, to trouble our spirits or discompose our duty. To bring ourselves to this frame of mind, it may not be improper to consider, that this virtue, in which is founded the very ease and comfort of our own souls, *Murmur-* takes off all anxiety and murmuring against *ing.* God and his wise providence: for Contentment includes a respect to divine providence in all our circumstances, and an humble submission to the disposal thereof. Happiness is more equally dealt, than (in our melancholy hours) we are apt to imagine. This is certain: that one part of the world are tolerably easy under such circumstances, as would be insupportable to the other. If the poor envy the rich, as exempt from that drudgery, to which they are subject; the rich may sometimes (with more justice) envy the industrious and temperate poor: because that very drudgery prevents the idle
swarm

Sund. 14.] *Of Murmuring and Ambition.* 363

swarm of restless thoughts, that spleen, distaste, and want of health, which high enjoyment of life, luxury and inaction, sometimes breed in them. After we have used a reasonable industry, to attain the necessaries of this present life; we ought not, to be any further anxious and solicitous about them: but, to rely on the providence of God, for a continual supply of these things, by his blessing upon our just endeavours; and to be content, with what proportion of them he is pleased to bestow upon us, in the ways of righteousness: if we fret, instead of helping ourselves, we encrease our difficulties, by making him our enemy. The reasons for which we ought thus contentedly to rely upon the providence of God, are founded upon these words of our Saviour: 'Is not the life more than meat: and the body, than raiment?' He, who first gave you life and being, without your contributing any thing towards it yourselves; will he not much more bestow upon you, in the ways of virtue and integrity, things necessary for the support and preservation of that life?

Contentment is also contrary to Ambition. Ambition is an unlawful desire of dominion and power, large possessions, and profuse living. A *Ambition.* contented person will, with pleasure, say; 'Though I have not so large a share, as some others; yet have I enough, to procure the necessaries of life: though I have not a provision for time to come, yet hath God hitherto given me my daily bread; and what occasion have I, to distrust him in his promises? Though I have not enough, to gratify every random inclination; yet I have sufficient, to supply real necessities: though some prosper more; yet the distress of others is greater: though I live more upon providence; yet have not goodness and mercy followed me? Why should I doubt, that, in the way of duty, they will follow me as long as I live? Though I have not every thing I wish for; yet I have more, than I deserve at the hands of God: though I be really poor; yet poverty has not always the nature of an affliction, or judgment from God; but is rather merely a state of life, appointed by God for the proper trial and exercise of the virtues of contentment, patience and resignation.'

Let us hence be instructed, never to judge of God's love or hatred to persons, by their outward circumstances : let us not conclude, because we are more fortunate in this world than our neighbour, that therefore we are greater favourites of God than he. Perhaps God meant, that these happy circumstances (as we account them) should be trials of our virtue ; and, according as we use them, should prove a blessing or a curse. If we bear ourselves with an even and composed mind ; if we make use of those advantages we have above other men, for the doing more good in the world than other men ; and if, in the midst of our prosperity, we neither vainly please ourselves, nor despise others, but walk reverently and humbly with our God in all our conversation ; then we have some reason to conclude, that these things are really a blessing to us : but, on the other side, if our prosperity tempt us to pride and insolence, to the forgetfulness of God and the contempt of men : if we use the advantage of our power to oppress the weak, of our wit to over-reach the simple, and of our wealth to minister to the purposes of vice and luxury, to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof ; then our great successes, by which we measure God's love to us, are not a blessing, but a curse.

See then the folly and madness of those, who take not God for their strength ; but trust to the multitude of their riches, and strengthen themselves in their wickedness, and think by these means to be fortified against the evils of this life ! There are numberless calamities, from which wealth and power can never shelter us : and therefore, if a man let go his trust in God, and take sanctuary in the strength of his own wickedness ; he will find himself miserably mistaken, when the day of adversity comes upon him. Our virtue is at least as much endangered by opulence, which administers numberless incentives to luxury, and temptations to insolence ; as it is by poverty : nay, some, who before seemed to want nothing but an ample fortune, as soon as they have acquired that, have from that time wanted almost every thing else, to make them

them valuable ; the heat and warmth of prosperity having called forth those vices, which lay dormant before under the rigour of poverty. What numbers have shortened their days, by abandoning themselves to all the unmanly pleasures of a dissolute life ; who, had they not been born to an affluent independent state, might have made a distinguished figure in the world ; who, had they not a fortune to support their follies, and keep pace with their lewd desires, might have thought it necessary, to lay in a stock of moral and intellectual endowments. It is true, riches give us larger opportunities of doing good ; and several make this use of them, and improve their own, by enlarging the common stock of happiness ; their religion (like the altar, which sanctified the gold) stamping a value upon, and dignifying, their fortune : but, unless we guard against criminal excesses, riches will (as the Apostle expresses it) bring us into a snare, and into many hurtful and foolish lulls, and such as drown men in perdition. Such considerations as these are the happy fruits of Contentment, and must necessarily exclude all Ambition from the heart possessed with them.

By Contentment we are also enabled, to make a necessary stand against covetousness ; that inordinate desire of encreasing our own substance, which *Of Covetousness.* tempts us to use irregular methods of defrauding and deceiving our neighbour. Be not eagerly and anxiously desirous, of what the providence of God hath not thought fit to allot thee ; be not envious, at what others enjoy ; be not discontented, with thine own state and condition in the world : for such a desire of encreasing our possessions, as tempts us at any time to use the unjust methods of defrauding or encroaching upon our neighbours, is sinful. It is wise to be easy, though we compass no more than a subsistence : for covetousness is never satisfied. Do we not see men arrive at one enjoyment after another, which once seemed the top of their ambition ; who yet are so far from contentment, that their desires grow faster than their substance ; and they are as eager to improve a large estate, as if they were still drudging for food and raiment ; which should be the bounds of our desires. The miser has so closely associated the ideas of happiness and money, that he cannot part or keep them

asunder, even when near the concluding scene of his life ; and at the same time, that he grows more indifferent to every person in the world, he becomes more strongly attached to the things of it. It was against this covetousness or unbounded desire, that Christ said, ' Take heed and ' beware of covetousness ;' for man's life consisteth not, in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. Both reason and religion command a prudent care of our affairs : but a contented mind will not allow us, to exceed herein ; which we shall do, if we engage in more cares, than we can manage with composure of mind ; or if we suffer any cares, to run out into anxiety and discontent. Whoever, from desire of gain, drown themselves in such a hurry of business as is beyond their capacity to manage ; defeat their own end, and hurt their souls ; not having a reasonable time, to attend their better interests : those, who are not satisfied with having acted the prudent part, and to leave the event to God ; but torment and rack their minds, about that which is not in their power ; they take that thought for the morrow, which our Saviour has condemned.

The necessity of Contentedness, therefore, in opposition to Covetousness, will yet appear more clearly, upon

Covetousness contrary to our duty to God a due consideration, that Covetousness is contrary to our duty to God, our Neighbour, and Ourselves. Our Saviour tells us, ' We cannot serve God and mammon ;' and it is a general observation, that a covetous man makes his gain the sole object of his desires, prefers his worldly business to the care of his soul, and will risque his very salvation, by lying, cheating, and neglecting his duty to God, to make what (in the eye of the world) is called a good bargain ; and sticks at no sin to compass his ends.

* And, in regard to our Neighbour ; Covetousness is
To our Neighbour. a breach both of justice and charity : he who makes no scruple of offending God, and of neglecting the great duties of religion, to get money, will never be afraid of tricking his neighbour : and, as the love of money is the root of all evil, so the man, who

who is swayed by that love, will not scruple to sacrifice his neighbour's body, goods, and reputation, to gather riches to himself.

In regard to Ourselves ; does he not sell his soul for those things, which at last must perish with the body ? Yet this is the case of the covetous man ; who either seeketh by unlawful means, to heap up riches ; or, having this world's goods, sets his heart upon his wealth : of whom the Apostle saith, ' He shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.' Besides, it is too commonly seen, that he will scarce allow his own body the necessary refreshments and conveniencies of life : therefore, as we regard our present and future comfort and happiness, it is our duty to seek for the virtue of contentedness ; which will guard us against this sin of covetousness, by which our body and soul are brought into misery. Our duty to God and charity to our neighbour induce us, to take pleasure in the welfare of others, whether we share in it personally or not. Shall my eye be evil against my neighbour, because God is good to him ? Contentment, as well as charity, envieth not. Whoever is possessed with contentment will not allow himself under any inconveniencies, to venture upon the violation of his conscience to remove them ; nor mend his circumstances, by any acts of fraud or violence, or by making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience towards God and man.

II. If we observe the various mercies, which actually attend us in every state, they will strongly oblige us to be content. Our circumstances are never so low and uneasy in this world, but there are some mixtures of mercy and favour to be found therein : though we lose some relation, yet others are left behind ; though we meet with some disappointments, yet are we not quite stript. Are there no instances, of a straiter condition than our own ; and is it not ingratitude to God, to overlook the advantageous parts of our condition ? Short life and the approaches of death do also speak the reasonableness of contentment with our present station. View the finished misery of sinners, who have shot the gulf ; who have not so much as

*To Our-
selves.*

*Helps to
Contented-
ness.*

a drop of water, to cool their tongues ; then say, Wherefore should a living man complain ? Anxiety and uneasiness is not the way to amend our circumstances : Discontent is not the way to the favours of providence ; nor leads it to the proper steps for the obtaining our desires ; it provokes God to be contrary to us, and discomposes our souls ; adds the weight of guilt to any burden ; stops the enjoyment of the mercies we have, and our thankfulness for them ; and is the parent of many great sins, and a discouragement to our christian profession in the sight of all men. They, who are continually complaining of inconveniencies, seem capable of relishing any thing, but heaven ; for which a complaining temper will by no means prepare them : whereas, not to repine at the inconveniencies we meet with here, may bring us to that place, where there are no inconveniencies at all, and he, who is not discontented with a slender portion of blessings, may have the greatest blessing of all (the Deity) to be his portion for ever and ever.

The Apostle had learned to be content, in whatever state he was ; not because he could chuse his condition, but because, by the grace of God, he could be reconciled to any state. Men misplace their discontent : they are very well satisfied, with what they are ; they are only dissatisfied, with what they have : whereas the very reverse ought generally to take place ; and the only desire we ought to set no bounds to, is that of encreasing in goodness. A slender allotment of worldly blessings will content an easy, modest, humble frame of mind : but no allotment whatever, no affluence how great soever, can satisfy an uneasy, restless, fretful temper ; ever seeking rest, and finding none ; making to itself disquietudes, when it meets with none ; and improving them, when it does. Our wants, according to nature's measures, are small ; but according to fancy's, they are infinite. Would men but be persuaded, to make their nature and their reason the measure of their wants, they might always live next door to satisfaction.

People judge wrong, when they imagine they may be assured of content, could they but obtain such a comfort, which their hearts are set upon ; for, when they are

are gratified in their desire, a worldly mind will out-grow their attainments; new wants will start up; and they will be as far from satisfaction, as at their first setting out.

No complicated happiness in this life.

Let us single out, whom we please: there are very few, with whom (all circumstances considered) we would exchange conditions in every particular. Such a man we take to be, in general very happy: but, if we descend to particulars, and take into the account (perhaps) his age, or health, or person, or abilities, or temper, or behaviour; we would rather continue as we are, than make a thorough exchange. Whatever seeming inequalities there may be, they are generally adjusted, either by the real satisfaction virtue gives, or by the false pleasures conceitedness and vanity afford.

Variety of worldly goods will not produce contentment: a small uneasiness (which an headstrong appetite or passion, not gratified, may cause) will take away the relish, of what is agreeable in life: no condition can make us happy; unless a foundation be laid for it, in the due regulation of our own tempers. There is no state of life, even the most desirable;

Content results not from our Condition.

which is not attended, with many peculiar disadvantages. We find several, who have no considerable advantages, either of fortune or honour or power, and are yet contented and easy; and several, who possess them all, are nevertheless extremely discontented and miserable: and we often think others happier than ourselves; with whom, as to many things, we would gladly change conditions. Are we engaged in a life of action and business? How do we applaud the happiness of those, who live in ease and privacy, and can command their own time! Do we, on the contrary, live in retirement, and have but few affairs to mind? Our time lies heavy on our hands; we complain, for want of employment; and call those only happy, who are men of business. Are we in great and splendid circumstances, above the rank of common men? Then we feel the cares and burthens this brings upon us? and cry up the secure and quiet state of those, who live in a lower sphere. And are we, on the contrary, in a low condition? None seem so

happy as the great, whom we falsely think above the reach of care. Thus are we generally unsatisfied, with our present condition ; and apt to like any other, rather than our own : such is the nature of mankind, or the nature of things themselves ; that no earthly delight or comfort can please us long.

A rational way of thinking is therefore an essential ingredient of happiness. We must possess ourselves with just apprehensions of things ; and not wind up our imaginations too high : for things, as they are in nature, will never answer to the gay ideas, a luxuriant fancy forms of them. An undisciplined imagination may suggest, ' O how happy should I be, ' could I but compass such a situation in life ! ' But, if calm reason might be suffered to put in its plea, it would answer, ' Why, just as happy as those, who are already ' in possession of it ; and that is, perhaps, not at all.'

If we place our happiness, in moderating our desires, we may be happy even now ; but, if we place it, in enlarging our possessions, we shall not be happy even then. These imaginary wants are often more vexatious to the opulent, than real wants are to the poor. If they be supplied, the gratification is but vanity, and contributes very little to real enjoyment ; and as soon as the gloss of novelty is worn off, the objects of their wish become tasteless and insipid : if they be not supplied, the disappointment is a vexation of spirit, and a perpetual source of uneasiness.

Some cannot retrench their pomp and equipage, even when their fortune is considerably impaired ; but, through an ambitious poverty, will maintain the show, when the substance is gone : their joys are pompous and visible, but, false and fantastic ; their cares, secret and concealed, but real and solid. Riches, by making pleasures familiar to them, flatten their relish for them ; but give a keener edge to every pain, which they must feel as well as other men : they dull their enjoyments, but point and quicken the sense of disappointments and affronts. Let us labour therefore, to have our minds content in any state ; and endeavour, to suit ourselves

selves to any condition, which will not furnish occasions for discontent and uneasiness: * and above all, let us pursue religious courses; for it is written, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God!' But this pursuit need not be so eager, as wholly to exclude the care of other things: nay, that is impossible, in this present life; and, to pretend to it, is but enthusiasm, and hinders the spreading of true religion. But seek this chiefly, and in the first place; make it your principal and main care: suffer nothing, to interfere or come in competition with it; and do it, above and before all other things: yet other things need not to be left undone.

We must never expect to be religious, without Diligence in the pursuit of virtue. There are, *Diligence.* in the course of a christian life, many duties to be performed, which require pains and care; many temptations to be resisted, which will keep us continually upon our guard: and the scripture frequently calls upon us, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; that is, with great watchfulness, and industry; to give all diligence, to make our calling and election sure; to follow holiness, and pursue it with great diligence. This is the very reason, why God has ordained, that there should be no employment, wherein a man may not perpetually be doing something for the honour of God, the good of men, or the improvement of virtue in himself: there is no business, nay, there is no innocent diversion; wherein he may not make it his chief and constant care, to act always like a reasonable creature and a good christian: there is no state of life, wherein he may not keep a constant eye upon a future state; and so use the things of the present world, as the great ultimate scope of all his actions may always respect that which is to come. We can get nothing, on any other terms; and without this, no man shall ever reach the state of eternal bliss; to this end therefore, we must use Watchfulness and Industry.

III. The duty of WATCHFULNESS requires a constant

* See Christian Fortitude and Patience, in *Sund. 16.*
Sec. V.

Watchfulness against sin.

stant care of our lives and actions ; that we be always upon our guard ; that we resist the beginnings of evil, and discover the first approaches of our spiritual enemy : that we be neither surpris'd by his snares and enticements, nor unprepared to encounter him whenever he attacks us. In a word ; it consists, in wisely foreseeing the dangers, which threaten our souls ; and then, in diligently avoiding the same.

The consideration of our own weakness and frailty is an argument, to promote our watchfulness ; not to mention the fickleness, the treachery, and deceitfulness of our hearts ; and the malice of the devil : he is very inveterate ; his malice will make him diligent, to watch all advantage against us ; and his great design will be, to shake our resolution : if that stand, he knows his kingdom will fall ; and therefore he raiseth all his batteries against it, and labours by all means to undermine this fort. The necessity of this duty is (therefore) visible, from the nature of our condition in this world, wherein we are surrounded with such a variety of temptations : there is no circumstance of life, entirely free from some sort of assault or other : all our ways are strewed with snares, by our powerful adversary ; who is prince of the air, and wants neither skill nor industry to work our ruin. It is also visible, from our own frailty and weakness ; whereby we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves ; and from the danger of our overthrow, whereby we become liable to the miseries of a sad eternity in a place of torment : and, except we be very watchful, we shall unavoidably be made a prey. He therefore, who expects God's grace and assistance, to keep him stedfast to his resolution, must not neglect himself : he must keep his heart with all diligence, and watch carefully over himself : for God worketh in us, both to will and to do ; and therefore expects, we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling ; lest, by our own carelessness and neglect, we miscarry, and so become liable to the miseries of a doleful eternity.

This will teach us the necessity also of *INDUSTRY* ; as well

well to improve our reason, understanding, and memory, which are the natural riches of the soul; as to cultivate the special graces of God, which are given us for that purpose. The natural gifts of God are so to be employed, as to promote the glory of God, the good of our neighbour, and the salvation of our own souls. A man should never be idle and slothful, nor intemperate, brutish, nor profane; as all those are, who turn their wit to a bad use; who prefer their reason to God's revelation, and load their memories with wicked thoughts, or at least with frothy romances and idle tales. Every person, who does good to the state, of which he is a member, by a faithful administration, or by a diligent discharge of his duty in any office he bears, or any place of trust he is called to; whoever is serviceable to others, in assisting them with good counsel in doubtful and difficult cases, relating to their souls, bodies, or estates; and whoever is taken up in instructing the ignorant, or in any other such matters, which require the pains of the mind; is so far, from being idle, or deserving to be reputed so, or to be looked upon as unworthy of a livelihood; that, as his labour is really the most difficult, so it is most useful and profitable to all.

Industry in improving the gifts of Nature.

Whence proceeds so great an increase of the poor of this kingdom? To what are their miseries owing? To sloth and idleness, owing to the neglect of parents, who take no care to educate them, when they are young, in learning, labour, or some honest way of trade or business; in which they might employ themselves, and be able to provide an honest maintenance: such, when grown up, will certainly become (what really they are) the very bane and pest of society; wasting and devouring the fruits of the diligent man's labours; robbing those, who are poor indeed, of the charity, which is their due,* and which would otherwise be afforded them; and, all the while, doing no sort of service to God, their prince, or their country: nay (what is still worse) spending the time, which lies upon their hands, in the most profligate courses, of lying, swearing,

The necessity of a virtuous Education.

* See the duty of Charity to the poor, Sunday 12.

swearing, and drinking; and in committing, sometimes, the most detestable crimes, of theft, whoredom, and murder. This should be a warning to all parents, and to such as are entrusted with the care and government of youth; that they improve their minds with sound principles of religion and good morality, and bring them up to learning, or in some honest trade or employment; * that, when they are grown up, they may be able, by their own skill and industry, to provide a competent maintenance for themselves, and to afford some supply and relief to the real wants and unavoidable necessities of their neighbours.

Suppose, a man were born to an estate; or had, by his industry, acquired one so plentiful, that, although he should take his ease, or indulge himself in sloth and luxury, there would be no danger of his falling into poverty; yet, in all probability, he would thereby render his condition as unhappy, as that of the meanest beggar: he would lose even the taste and pleasure of worldly things, by a too frequent use of them; and would most certainly endanger his health, by an idle way of living; for, it is known by experience, that ease, and sleep, and want of exercise, are the chief causes of most bodily distempers. †

Of all sorts of Idleness, that of Artificers or Labourers is surely the most blameable; who loiter away that time, for which they receive wages: it is a downright cheat upon those, whose business they have undertaken: it is robbing them of their Money; and may prove more injurious, than common robbery; if the affairs, they are entrusted with, should miscarry through their carelessness. God, who will not suffer the labouring man to be defrauded of his hire; but declares, that the cry of such injustice ascends up to him for vengeance; does equally abhor any fraud, committed on the labourer's part: the Apostle therefore commands, that no man go beyond, or defraud his brother, in any matter: and surely, all eye servants; all, who receive

* See the duty of Parents, Sunday 8. Sect. VII.

† See Time, in Sunday 16. Sect. I.

receive wages for their time, if they squander it away in idleness, are guilty of the greatest fraud ! * Let such consider, what the Apostle there adds ; ‘ The Lord is the avenger.’

What shall we say of those enthusiasts, who neglect and quite lay aside their domestic concerns, their families, their children or servants ; or the employments by which they should get their livelihood, under the pretence of a purer religion ? Such men certainly do not consider the nature of the christian religion ; which is to make men holy, in their persons and in their lives : but not in the least to take them off, from their worldly callings, or from using those talents, which God hath given them, for the benefit of their country : neither do they consider the obligation they are under to the public society, whereof they are members : for hereby they are not only rendered useless to the common wealth, but often do a great deal of mischief to it, by unsettling and subverting other men, and filling their heads with abundance of foolish notions and scruples in religion, which are dangerous to government, and to the public peace and happiness. As to the better serving God, by thus leaving their callings ; it is a mere pretence : for he serves God best, who doth most good in the world.

Idle Enthusiasm, inconsistent with religion, and injurious to society.

The man, who serves God by continual application to the duty of his calling and state of life ; besides the comfort of a good conscience, which is of all others the greatest happiness : such an honest and industrious labourer may entirely depend upon the goodness of God, that he will always take care of him : God will bless and prosper him in the work of his hands, and stir up the hearts of good men to assist and relieve him ; and, whenever his strength faileth him through sickness, old age, or misfortunes, let him not doubt, but he shall be provided for in such a manner, as shall be best for him.

The blessings of Industry.

Yet there can be no certainty, that God will bless us, except we also grow in grace : therefore, says the Apostle, ‘ Give all diligence to add to your faith virtue, &c.’ or improve the grace of God by an industrious and virtuous life ; remembering, that the more we

Industry, in improving gifts of grace.

* See Duty of Servants, in Sunday 9. Sect. 8.

improve the talent committed to our charge, the more abundance will be given unto us; for it is the gift of God, for a man to eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour: such a man reaps the fruit of his pains and industry, with a quiet conscience; a pleasure, with which the cheat and oppressor are unacquainted: he is free from contention, from vexations, suits and disturbances; the envy and ambition of others can have no designs, nor take advantage against him, who possesseth no more, than what he labours for; he is no man's slave or dependent; is under no temptation, to flattery or mean compliances: he need not cringe or sneak to the wealthy for his bread, who can live upon his own, and is able in some measure to relieve others; and (what is the greatest blessing) his continual employment keeps him out of the way of those numerous temptations and occasions of sin, to which idle people are always exposed.

Let then our endeavours be, to improve in all sorts of
To improve virtue and piety: whoever bend their minds
good notions. upon heaven, are always advancing in paths
 that lead thereto; they do their duty, and
 strive to perform it after a more perfect manner; they
 take every opportunity, of doing good to the bodies and
 souls of men; are upon their guard, to keep their passions
 under good government, and ready to obey all the
 inspirations of the Holy Ghost. As we shall be answerable
 for the grace we have neglected, and for not improving
 what God hath blessed us with; let not the Holy Spirit
 grieve, who is the author of peace and joy; but surrender
 ourselves, obedient to his call. Certainly if we
 understood the value of the least of his favours, and those
 good thoughts, which pass unregarded; we should esteem
 them very highly, and not render them of no advantage
 by stupid negligence. Take care, that every spark of a
 good thought be blown into a flame, that it may produce
 a suitable practice in our lives and manners. The Lord
 stands knocking at the door; refuse not to open, and let
 him into your heart. God bestows his grace, in proportion
 to our use thereof; and a right improvement in the
 first degree prepares us, for a larger blessing from him:
 to him that hath, shall be given; and from him that hath
 not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

We

We are taught that God will (in justice) withdraw his grace, when wilfully neglected: How then shall we escape? for, when man is once deprived of God's grace, he is delivered up to the power of the devil, banished from the sight of God, and bound over to eternal damnation; wherefore it is written, 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The danger of abusing God's grace.

When an opportunity offers, of practising an act of mortification, humility, charity, or patience, &c. we may be prevailed upon by a false persuasion, to think, 'that act of virtue cannot be performed at that time; that it is unreasonable; and though good in itself, may better be adjourned to another opportunity:' and so, instead of complying with that holy motion, which solicits us to good, by listening to the deceit of the evil one we are diverted from it.

How far hindered by temptation.

SUNDAY. XIV. PART II.

IV. The scriptures indeed teach us, that the Devil is always ready to tempt men to sin: yet it is always carefully to be observed, that he can do nothing more than tempt us. He has no power over our persons, or our wills: he can only set baits and allurements before us; but we cannot be hurt by them, except we yield to them, and chuse them. The treachery and corruptness of our own hearts within is much more dangerous, than all the assaults of the enemy from without. Let no man say, when he is tempted, 'I am tempted of God;' let no man plead, as an excuse for his sin, that God permitted the devil to tempt him: as God cannot be tempted himself, so neither tempteth he any man; neither doth he permit the devil, to tempt any man further, than by laying before him such allurements, as it is in the person's power, and it is his duty, and the proper trial and exercise of his virtue, to resist: but every man is then (and then only) tempted, then only effectually and sinfully tempted; when he is drawn away, and enticed, of his own lust. The enemy of man's salvation can do nothing

The power the Devil has to tempt Man.

thing more, than entice the covetous with hopes of gain: puff up the ambitious, with expectation of honour; allure the voluptuous, with prospects of pleasure: and, where the mind is not under the power of any of these corrupt affections, the tempter finding nothing in it, his temptations can take no hold, and his power is at an end: 'Resist the devil (says the Apostle) and he will flee from you.' The apprehension therefore, which many melancholy pious persons have sometimes entertained, of the great power of the devil, is very erroneous and groundless: but it is a much greater fault in bad men, to magnify the devil's power, as they are very apt to do, in order to excuse their own crimes; as if, because the devil tempted them to do ill things, therefore the doing those ill things was a less fault in themselves. This error ariseth from a very false notion, of the devil's power of tempting men; which is nothing more, than that of wicked men tempting one another.

We must not (however) rely too much upon ourselves: *How to guard against temptations* in cases of conscience, we must apply to those, who watch over our souls; the ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God. We are all apt, to be too partial to ourselves; and are too presumptuous, when we lean too much to our own apprehensions: but the guidance of our pastor is one of the means, God affords for our improvement; and his assistance is very necessary, to preserve us from being imposed upon. Remember, that the careless and secure live in continual hazard of their own eternal loss; and that, if we would be saved, we must continually watch against all temptations: for the judge of eternal life and death declares; 'What I say unto you, I say unto all; watch!'

V. Having considered those christian virtues, which in a proper manner respect our Souls; let us *Duties to our Bodies.* now proceed to those virtues which in a more particular manner regard our Bodies.

The first of these duties is the virtue of *Of Chastity.* CHASTITY or PURITY; because (as the Apostle declares) 'He, that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own Body.' This virtue consists in abstaining not only from adultery and fornication, but

but from all other more unnatural sorts of it ; committed, either upon ourselves, or with any other ; so that it is a due government of those appetites, which God has planted in us for the increase of mankind, which must be confined within the bounds of lawful matrimony ; since any other method of gratifying them is contrary to that purity, which the gospel enjoins. Nay ; even in that state, men are not to give a loose to their appetites like brute beasts, which have no understanding ; but to keep themselves within the modest rules of a marriage state : which being ordained, for the begetting of children to be brought up in the fear of God, and for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, so as to keep ourselves undefiled members of Christ's body ; nothing must be committed, which may hinder the first reason for marriage : and they, who prostitute that holy state to the heightening and enflaming their lust, act contrary to the second reason ; which proposes marriage, only as the means to subdue lust, and to keep men from any sinful effects of it. ' This is the will of God, even your sanctification ; that ye should abstain from fornication ; that every one should know, how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour ; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God : for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.' Yet in seeing, hearing, and touching, many conclude themselves innocent, while free from the lustful deed ; and indulge themselves in all liberties, short of the last act of uncleanness.

He who suffers his eyes to rove, and fixes them upon a forbidden object, will be apt to commit adultery : for, our Saviour saith, ' He, that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' He who indulges any of his senses so far, as to excite any desire of forbidden pleasures, defiles his soul therewith ; and they, who would preserve their innocence, must keep their eyes, their ears, and their hands, chaste ; that is, they must neither look upon, read, hear, nor touch any thing, which may in any manner enflame or dispose them, to gratify their sinful passions.

*Uncleanness
forbidden in
the very
lowest de-
gree.*

' When lust is conceived, it bringeth forth sin ;' when
we

The mis- we are thus set upon a precipice, corrupt na-
chiefs of it. ture pushes us upon the ruin of ourselves. The
 great neglect of this virtue produces much of
 that irreligion, which prevails in the world ; for, if early
 breaches of innocence had not been made by indulging
 sinful passions, men's minds would not be so averse from
 entertaining the principles of religion, founded in the true
 reason and interest of mankind : when the spirit is sub-
 dued by the flesh, the obligations of religion begin to lose
 their force ; the means of religion are first neglected, and
To the Soul. then the principles of it begin to be question-
 ed ; and by degrees men are made such slaves
 to their lusts, that their recovery is desperate, and they are
 rarely awakened to a sense of their follies, until the miseries
 of a sad eternity drive them (when it is too late) to repent.

Besides, the sinning against our bodies, as the Apostle
To the Body. calls it, exposes us to trouble and vexation of
 mind : for, if the unclean sinner have not cast
 off the fear of God, a virtuous education, God's all-
 searching eye (from which nothing can be hidden) a
 dreadful judgment (which nothing can turn away) a de-
 vouring fire (which must be his portion to all eternity)
 will continually awaken him to repentance, and fill him
 with the horror of his sin : and, though he have even sti-
 flled the checks of conscience, the eye of man must still be
 shunned and avoided ; for, as bad as the world is, vice
 has not the current stamp ; measures must be concerted,
 opportunities must be sought for, our best friends must
 be imposed upon ; and every minute we must tremble,
 through fear of being discovered in our vicious habit. It
 can hardly be expressed, what fears crowd upon young
 persons seduced by this passion, if there be the least re-
 mains of modesty, and sense of honour left : nay, the
 anguish of some people's minds, upon these occasions, has
 risen so high ; they have made away with themselves, to
 get rid of its torture. The acute and filthy pains and di-
 seases, it brings upon the body ; the shame and dishonour,
 which is reaped among men ; and the base and disho-
 nourable actions, which are the too common supports of
 such crimes, may convince the sinner, how dearly he
 purchases the forbidden pleasures of his lustful appetites :
 they, who are under the power of these evil habits, know
 the

the force of them ; and (notwithstanding their serious resolutions at some times, the horror of their condition, their uneasiness from the expence, which attends their extravagancies) are not able to break their chains.

To the former mischief we must add the judgments of God against this vice of Uncleaness. Some of the most extraordinary are, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from heaven, and the untimely death of Amnon : the fate also of Zimri and Cosbi (who were slain in the very act) should deter the most vicious from the evil of their way ; and the rather, because God, who seeth all things, and hath made man to be the temple of his Holy Spirit, declares, by his Apostle ; That, if any man defile the temple of God, he ' shall be destroyed.'

The Judgments of God against it.

It is easy, to infer the deplorable state of an unclean person ; who, being cut off by the hand of divine justice, is shut out of the kingdom of heaven, because nothing impure can dwell therein ; and consigned to the flames of hell, to be punished for the lustful flames of his flesh. Therefore (notwithstanding the ill-bred and brutal task of libertines, than which nothing can be more brutal, except it be their actions) Fornication is a crime ; because it is that, which can never be for the good of the world, that it should be universally done : it is impossible, any particular practice should be warrantable, which, if it became general, would be introductive of disorder and confusion ; for that is confessedly contrary to the laws of nature, which, if universally practised, would interfere with the general peace and happiness of mankind. In cases, where one has as much right to gratify himself as another ; whatever would be big with evils, and productive of misery, if all men were to do it, cannot, for that very reason, be lawful to any man : because any man, by so doing, contributes his share to the introduction of that misery and disorder.

Fornication, against the law of Nature.

VI Perhaps, the first motions of our passions may not be under our government, and we may not be answerable for them ; but it is in our own power, to stifle and suppress them, to reject

Helps to Chastity.

them

them with horror and confusion, and to apply our minds vigorously upon other objects, which will certainly divert them ; because the frame of our nature is not capable, of dwelling at the same time entirely upon two things. Wherefore we should take care, not to indulge any filthy fancies ; we should with indignation cast away every scene of lust, which represents itself to us ; for our security lies in flight, rather than looking the temptation in the face. As we must govern our thoughts, by looking forward ; so must we guard against obscene remembrances, of what is past ; else we may deliberately delight in follies, in which (it may be) we have been at first engaged by rashness and surprise.

The greatest sign of a corrupt heart is filthy and unclean discourse : we must therefore take care, *The evil of* that our speech betray not the disorder of our *unclean discourse.* hearts ; and especially, that our words be free from open lewdness, and from any double meaning ; and never to make use of words capable of several senses, with a design to create any unchaste thoughts in those we converse with : nay, we must even avoid conveying any unchaste thought to our neighbour, though we can preserve ourselves from blame in the way of expressing it : for this manner of offending does most hurt, because the poison is gilded and made palatable ; whereas downright filthy talk shocks at first hearing, and, being directly opposite to natural modesty, has not so bad an influence upon the hearers. In reports also concerning others, we must not so repeat particulars, as to offend christian modesty ; for hereby we contract too great a familiarity with idle discourse, and corrupt the minds of the hearers, by entertaining them with such things as they should never learn, but should forget as soon as they chance to hear them. Fifthly, conversation is most unbecoming in those, who are advanced in years ; because it argues a mind extremely depraved, and gives too great a countenance to youthful follies.

They, who resolve to keep their bodies in chastity, *The use of* must not pamper them, nor exceed in meat *Fasting.* and drink ; for which purpose, fasting has in all ages been made use of : among the many reasons, which enforce the practice of it, it is not the least

least considerable, that it restrains the looser appetites of the flesh, and disposes us to sobriety and seriousness: when therefore we abate of the rigour of fasting, we should not forget to abstain from such food, as is most nourishing to the body; for, feeding to the full betrays us to loose mirth, and pampers the unhappy disease of our nature; which, it is our chief business, to cure and overcome. We must also divert our thoughts, from dwelling upon forbidden objects; and do our duty, in our proper callings: for, when we are prosecuting any art or science, when we are employed in any innocent business or any lawful calling, we are not at leisure to entertain thoughts of pleasure; and (as the appetites of our bodies frequently follow the bent of our minds) that, which we most think of, we are readiest to do; consequently our great care ought to be, to keep ourselves always employed. If we be engaged in a calling, let us prosecute it with diligence and application: if our condition and quality settle us above a profession, let the care of our own estate, and the acquiring such knowledge as may be serviceable to ourselves and our neighbour, challenge a great share of our time; for, being thus profitably busied, we shall leave no room for the unclean spirit, to enter into our soul, and tempt us. Men of pleasure are in the number of those, who know not how to spend their days; chastity can seldom maintain its ground, in an idle soil; but is sacrificed to an enemy, always within us, and ready to betray us.

Many men have been ruined, by presuming upon their own strength; by running themselves into temptations which they had the confidence to think they could easily master: *The danger of Presumption.* sad experience has convinced them of their error; and want of caution has made work for repentance, and for petition for greater strength. That man is happy, who feareth always; but confidence is the portion of fools. Natural corruption is great, and the violence of our appetites is strong: so that, if we give them all the liberty we lawfully may, they will quickly master us, and snatch at such pleasures as are unlawful. Therefore from a sense of our own weakness, and of the power of temptation, we must keep at a distance from all such cir-

circumstances, as may possibly corrupt innocence: trust not thyself in reading books, which are designed to enflame the passions; to gaze on pictures, which provoke desire; or converse with company, who delight to shew their wit in obscene discourse. Of all passions, love is the most dangerous, because the hardest to be conquered: all kinds of intimacies therefore, which may fire our passions, are to be avoided, because they insensibly engage our affections; which, when they are fixedly bent upon an object, seek to gratify themselves by the enjoyment thereof. Nay friendship itself, though founded purely upon virtue and merit, and the least supported by sense, may in the issue prove fatal and dangerous: for, though at first we be only charmed with the beauties of the mind, or entertained with a good understanding, or edified by a modest and virtuous behaviour; yet, by degrees, our admiration and delight in these accomplishments extends itself to the whole person, and the talents of the mind render the body more pleasing and agreeable; so that, what begins in the spirit, without care and the grace of God, may end in the flesh and the lust thereof.

Use therefore frequent and fervent prayer. This is the way to procure that grace of God, which is necessary to preserve us from falling, or to recover us, if we fall; its frequency will fix our minds upon spiritual objects, and fill us with a sense of God's being present every where; an impression, which is proper to keep our appetites under government: and its fervour will make worldly pleasures of less esteem in our affections. We must therefore beg of God, that he would create in us a perfect abhorrence to all impurity; that he would cleanse us, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; that he would set a strict guard on our senses, turn away our eyes, stop our ears, bridle our tongue, and restrain our hands from all uncleanness; and that he would give us grace, to fly all temptations or opportunities of corrupting our neighbour or ourselves. When impure thoughts are the remains of a bad life, and the punishment of evil habits we formerly contracted; we must endeavour to quench this fire, with the tears of repentance for what is past; we must confess before God
the

the impurity of our former lives, and abhor ourselves for those follies, whereby we have offended him; we must beg him, to strengthen our resolutions, and in his good time to cast out the remains of the unclean spirit: we must look upon them, as a just correction for our former disorders; and submit with patience and humility, saying (with Joseph's brethren,) 'We have deserved these things, because we have sinned:' and we must the rather apply ourselves to this remedy of prayer, because, through its power and strength, all other means become successful and effectual. *

* See the duty of prayer, and its efficacy, in Sunday 7.

SUNDAY XV.

- I. *Of Temperance in eating, with its ends and rules.* II. *Of temperance in drinking, with its proper ends and rules.* III. *Of Intemperance, and the false ends of drinking.* IV. *Of drinking spirituous liquors; the degrees of the sin of Drunkenness, the great guilt of it, the great mischiefs attending it, and the necessity and difficulty of forsaking it, with a caution to young people.* V. *The excuses made by drunkards are no reason to continue in their sin.*

I. **T**HE second virtue, which respects the right government of the Body, *Of Temperance.* is TEMPERANCE; which is the proper government of the appetites, in eating, drinking, sleep, recreation, and apparel.

First, Of EATING: We must never indulge our appetites, by eating beyond what God and nature has intended for the being and well-being of our bodies; because life and health *Temperance in eating.* are the foundation of all other enjoyments; and are therefore of greater value, than all other possessions put together; because they are necessary, to the enjoyment of those possessions,

The Wisdom of Temperance. The principal point of wisdom, in the conduct of human life, is, so to use the enjoyments of this present world; as that they may not themselves shorten that period, wherein it is allowed us to enjoy them: if any part of knowledge deserves a steadier attention than another; if there be any, which of all others has the justest pretence to be esteemed invaluable; it is unquestionably that knowledge, by which (as the wise man expresses it) our days may be multiplied, and the years of our life may be increased. 'Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die,' was the reasoning of the Epicure; but it was false reasoning, to make the melancholy consideration of the shortness of life an argument for debauchery, when that very debauchery is evidently the cause of making man's life still shorter. Temperance and sobriety, the regular government of our appetites and passions, the promoting peace and good order in the world, are, even without regard to any arguments of religion, the greatest instances of human wisdom; because they are the most effectual means of preserving our being and well-being in the world, and of prolonging the period, and enlarging the comforts and enjoyments of life.

The advantages of Temperance. As to the preservation of life; it is certain, no man can live without eating: for, as physick is necessary to restore us to our former health; so is eating the proper means, to cure that hunger, which is natural to man; and which if not prevented, must prove his mortal disease. Eating then being thus necessary to preserve our bodily health, whatever eating is conducive to the health and welfare of our bodies, is also lawful: but, whoever eats with the sole view of pleasing his taste, or (what is more sinful) of exciting lust in his own body; he acts not only against his present, but his future interest: for, by surfeiting and drunkenness many fall into divers diseases, and are brought to untimely deaths.

The danger of Intemperance in eating.

No man should engorge himself so, as to hurt his health; nor indulge his appetite with niceness and luxury: for whoever enslaves himself to his palate, must be sure to do himself hurt by that, which God gives him

him for his good. Consequently, whatever we find hurtful to our health, or which is found commonly to make our bodies heavy, is to be avoided: for that is fit to nourish some constitutions, which is hurtful to others; and some require such a quantity to preserve their bodies in a regular state, as would draw others from their duty; but most people may judge of this for themselves: temperance obliges every man, ordinarily to abstain from those supports of life, for quality or quantity, which hurt his constitution.

They, who indulge themselves, either in the daintiness or plenty of provisions, above their condition and state, are guilty of intemperance; though it may not be so accounted in those, who can afford it. *The danger of high living.* 'Who hath woe? (saith So-

lomon) who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They, that tarry long at the wine; they, that go to seek mixed wine.' What sickness and diseases have some brought upon themselves, merely by their excesses and debaucheries! Diseases, which have not terminated with their own lives, but have been entailed upon their unhappy posterity! If men will run into those excesses, which enflame and corrupt their blood; it is no wonder, if a fever or dropsy, or some more fatal distemper, proceed from such a disorder.

How unreasonable is it, to risque the good of the whole man, body and soul, to please the palate? The intemperate suffer by diseases and anxieties here; and, without timely repentance, must expect to be punished hereafter, for their intemperance. *Means of it.*

The unreasonableness of this sin appears again, if we consider, that its short pleasure is nothing in comparison of its eternal punishment. Is it not then most shameful, that such, as call themselves christians, should ever be overtaken with this vice; which levels them to beasts here, and torments them with devils hereafter? Therefore, when ye eat, take heed to yourselves, that your hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting; and remember, that we all stand obliged, by the general precept not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: consequently, such studied and customary pleas-

ing of the appetite, as settles the spirit in a sensual frame, or a strong turn toward bodily satisfactions, is not blameless. Frequent and high feasting is dangerous for most people; and though all feasting be not unlawful, yet most of those, who (like the rich man in the parable) fare sumptuously almost every day, must confess, they put their minds out of frame, give too strong a bent to sensual good, and abate their delight of spiritual comforts; and what shall unthinking people expect better than (as he did) to want a drop of water, to cool their tongue, in the next world?

II. We are, in the next place, to avoid all Intemperance in DRINKING. As the end of eating is the being and well-being of life; so is the end of drinking, the preservation of life, the repairing of the spirits, and the fitting and preparing men to go through the business of the station in which Providence has placed them: whoever therefore drinks so, as to frustrate any of these ends, is guilty of Intemperance. It must be observed in general, that the constitutions, ages, and other circumstances among mankind, are so different from one another; nay, the same constitution is so different from itself, according to different times and seasons; there can be no one fixed rule of Temperance, in this respect; because the same proportion, which to one person is not a sufficient nourishment, may to another be excess: so that, what proportion is necessary or convenient, what is within the bounds of moderation, and what not, must in a great measure be left to the judgment of every particular christian, upon an honest and conscientious regard to these true ends of drinking, as well as eating. God hath planted in every man a natural desire of life; and eating and drinking are the only refreshments he has given, to support it: but, when we speak of the refreshments, which nature desires and calls for, we must carefully distinguish, between the desires of nature before a habit of intemperance, and those after it. Nature, not vitiated with custom or habit, is easy and content with a reasonable and moderate refreshment; but the cravings of nature under the dominion of habit (if we may then call it nature) are unlimited and endless: the more they are indulged, the more eager

eager they are ; and never cease, until the senses and understandings be drowned. They are as much a disease, as thirst in a fever ; and are no more to be gratified, than that : nay, much less, if the matter be rightly considered ; as that is (at most) attended only with temporal death, whereas the certain effect of this is death eternal.

It is very sinful in itself therefore, and very ungrateful and unreasonable in us ; to suffer an inordinate appetite, to turn those very blessings

*The Rule of
Temperance.*

to the destruction of life, which God has graciously given us for the preservation of it ; not that men are bound, to live by weight and measure ; or are presently sinful, if they go beyond the proportions, which will barely support life : the great guard and caution, God requires at our hands, is not so much, to keep to the nice proportions, which will barely preserve life ; as to keep from that, which will weaken and destroy : for, between the proportions, which will barely support nature, and those that will overcharge it, there is a compass and latitude, within which we may innocently enjoy the blessings of heaven. God has provided drink, as well as meat, in the nature of remedies ; to revive and refresh the drooping spirits, and to give new life and vigour to the whole frame : but we must remember, to use them, as God intended them ; not so, as to lay aside or supersede our natural strength and vigour, but only to assist nature, when we find her faint and drooping : we must not apply these remedies, until nature call for them ; that is, when we are either pressed by hunger and thirst, or tired and overcome with thought and labour : nor, even when nature does call for them, must we apply them in larger proportions than she requires, or larger than will fairly answer her needs. As the end of drinking and eating is, to fit and prepare us for the business of the station, wherein Providence hath placed us ; it follows, that one great rule and measure, in the enjoyments of those blessings, is, to use and apply them in such a manner, as may make them most subservient to the daily business of our calling and profession : this we do, when in our ordinary course we make the seasons of drinking and eating, what they ought to be, only short retreats from business, and not the business of life ; when we take care, in convenient

time to return to the duties and offices of our calling, and to carry with us sufficient understanding and abilities to pursue it; and when, what we call the unbendings of our mind, which may be sometimes necessary, are rare, and without any mixture of riot or excess: for whatever is beyond these, is an irregular and sinful use of God's creatures.

III. By attending to what has been said, you will be able to judge, not only what are the proper bounds of sobriety and temperance, and when you exceed those bounds; but also, how great and heinous the guilt of that excess is, and its wretched abuse of the blessings of God, not only in forgetting their proper ends, but in perverting them to ends directly contrary; in turning that to the destruction of life, which God gave for the preservation of it; in making that the means of stupefying the spirits, which he designed to raise and refresh them; in transforming ourselves into the state of brutes, by the very helps he bestows for a more vigorous discharge of the duties and offices of a rational creature; and finally, in making that the occasion of indisposing ourselves for the business of life, which God graciously gives to support us under it. Yet, from the common and loathsome practice of drinking unto drunkenness, it is manifest, they have adopted other ends of drinking, than those warrantable by the law of God.

First, A drunkard pretends, that he falls into that excess by good Fellowship, or keeping another company in that wicked practice. It would be well for such, to consider; that he may, by such a height of complaisance, bring himself into a bad state of health; nay (what is worse) it poisons the soul of man, always deprives him of reason, distracts his brain, and makes him worse than a beast here, and endangers the loss of his soul hereafter; and (as many examples prove) he may be cut off in the midst of a drunken fit.

Preserving friendship. *Secondly,* Some excuse the sin, by the specious pretence of preserving Friendship. But this is a mere drunken excuse; for who in his

his senses can think he serves his friend, by helping him to ruin his estate, his credit, his life, and his soul? What is more apt to breed quarrels, which are too often attended with blows, and wounds and murder? Solomon saith, 'Wine (when it is drunk to excess) maketh bitterness of mind, and causeth brawling and strife.'

Thirdly, It is also argued by drunkards, that they only drink to cheer their spirits, or to make themselves merry. Yet, what is the laughter of such, but (as Solomon remarks) Madness? *Cheering spirits.*

They part freely, with their reason, health, goods, and reputation, in this world; and must render a sad account of such extravagancies, in the world to come.

Fourthly, They, who pretend they drink to put away Cares, plead for the greatest of all follies; because such a practice cannot keep any considerable cares long out of their mind. Was *Putting away cares.*

it ever known, that any one, pursued by public justice, sought to conceal himself by getting drunk? And is it not an infinitely greater folly and madness, by surfeiting, drunkenness and riotous living, to endeavour to stifle the checks of conscience, which pursue the sinner to the judgment-seat of Christ; than, by repentance, to seek for pardon and forgiveness? And should the cares be only of worldly concern, and such as are fit to be avoided and put away? Has not God in such cases provided and invited us? And shall we prefer drinking to God's assistance? Whoever therefore would not be accounted, to have quite cast off all religion and reason, must never have recourse to drunkenness in such cases: because it at once rejects the commandment and providence of God, and loads the conscience with a new crime: which, in sober intervals, redoubles, all such cares with greater force.

Fifthly, Idle people too frequently alledge, that drinking is a recreation, and serves them to pass away time. This if true, is a caveat against *Passing away time.* idleness, the pretended cause of so great a sin: but, if we survey the drunken part of mankind, it will be found to be a very idle excuse; for God's providence has so stationed every man, that no body need be idle, but through choice; he may always be employed,

for his own or his neighbour's good : and, whoever is most at leisure from worldly employment, should be more diligent, to resist temptations, and to improve the graces and virtues, which God has bestowed upon him, for the edification of his neighbour, and for the good of his own soul.

Sixtly, Some so far betray their reason, as to pretend, they get drunk to avoid reproach from their drunken companions. Certainly such people forget, that drunkenness is a breach of God's commandments; and consequently, to be reproached for keeping his commands, is so far from being hurtful, that it brings a blessing upon them : for as our Saviour declares, ' Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and ' say all manner of evil against you, for my sake : ' therefore, says St. Peter, ' If ye be reproached for the name ' of Christ, happy are ye.' On the contrary, they, who chuse to obey man rather than God, by breaking the vow at their baptism to renounce the world, not only run into many evils in this life ; but incur God's displeasure, and the danger of everlasting destruction. Is it not a degree of madness, to yield to the reproaches of the foolish and worst of men, and to be deaf to the well grounded reproaches of the wise and good ? But the greatest consideration of all, to deter men from this false way of arguing, is that dreadful sentence, which Christ has pronounced on all them, who disobey him through fear of the reproach of men ; ' Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me ' and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation ; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, ' when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the ' holy angels.' Such is the deplorable end of those, who cast off their sobriety, as they think, to avoid the scoffs, reproaches, or injuries of men : yet it is well known, that many, who endeavour to frighten others into the sin of drunkenness by such means, are of all others most ready to scorn and despise those, who accompany them in the same excess of drinking. One drunkard is always the object of another's laughter.

*Pleasure of
the drink.*

Secondly, There are some, who sot by themselves, and drink (as we say) for drinking sake ; but, when a man is so far depraved in

in his reason, there is more hope of a fool, than of him; yet they are generally unwilling to own this. Was not Esau, who sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, blameworthy, though in need of refreshment? What then can be the hope of a man, who sells his health, reason, soul, and his God, for such drink, as is so far from nourishing, that it only serves to destroy him?

Eighthly, The most common and plausible excuse, which men now-a-days make, to palliate this sin of drunkenness, is the necessity, they say, men *Bargaining*: are under in driving bargains, or in the way of trade. It is true, such a wicked practice has been introduced by designing and crafty men, who endeavour to defraud or over-reach those, with whom they traffick: and therefore, it is so far, from losing any of its malignity; that the very intention of taking an advantage of another, made drunk for that purpose, is a great aggravation of the crime: besides, how can any man presume so much upon his own head, as to imagine, he may not first be intoxicated, and then be subject to the very deceit, which he proposed to impose upon the other? This would be driving a very bad bargain.

Another excuse, too common among drunkards, is the plea of custom and general practice. They plead that such a life is, either harmless to the body; *Custom*. or, at worst, but a sin of infirmity, not sufficient to debar any one from heaven: but it may as well be urged, that there is no heaven, as that drunkenness will not exclude us from it; for drunkenness is numbered, by the Apostle, among those sins; which those who commit, *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*.

SUNDAY XV. PART II.

IV. Thus far intemperance in drinking has been considered in general, without any distinction of various liquors, by which it is occasioned: but *Of spirituous liquors*. that of spirituous liquors deserves our peculiar consideration. Nothing can be more clear in reason, than the quick tendency of those liquors to shorten and destroy life: not only, by depraving the appetite, and drawing on a disrelish of wholesome nourishment, as ex-
perience.

perience shews ; but also, as physicians assure us, by hardening the provisions, which are sent into the stomach ; and thereby hindering the operations of those helps, which God has provided, for a regular digestion, and for a kindly conveyance of nourishment to every part : besides the other fatal effects, which are charged upon them by physicians ; as palsies and apoplexies, from their operation upon the brain and nerves ; and of jaundices and dropsies, from their operation upon the bowels.

Their effect on the spirits. The seeming relief, which our spirits receive from those liquors, is not only of short continuance, but frequently runs into phrensy and madness ; enflaming, instead of comforting ; intoxicating, instead of enlivening. As, through such a violent and precipitate consumption, the spirits they give are soon spent ; so do they leave the body vapid and lifeless, and under an eager longing after a speedy recruit from those artificial aids ; which are only so many steps to the grave, and (in truth) deserve no better name, than a slower kind of poison.

Their abuse of the Constitution. Lastly, It cannot be, but they must (by the same degrees) impair the strength, and enfeeble the constitution, and make the whole man weak and listless ; less willing to set about his business, and less able to go through the labour and fatigue of it. Thus it must be, in nature : and thus it is daily seen to be, in experience and observation : and though persons in the married state may not be enough concerned, about the mischiefs they do themselves ; they are to be put in mind, that in them it is not only irreligious, but unnatural and cruel, to have no sense or feeling of the weakness and infirmities, which they are entailing upon their innocent offspring : especially, when the temptations lie so much in every one's way ; and when the appetite is gratified, and the brain intoxicated, at so easy an expence ; and when by a little indulgence, the cure becomes so very difficult. Such considerations should of themselves, and without any other enforcements, be effectual warnings to all parents and masters ; to use the utmost watchfulness over those, who are under their care ; that none of them be ensnared by these temptations, into the beginning of a distemper, so hard to be cured.

These

Those deceive themselves, who think, that a man is only to be accounted a drunkard, when he is so drunk, as not to be able to go, or stand, or speak : for every lower degree of drinking *Degrees of this sin.* which makes a man very dull, ridiculous, or unfit for any employment, or full of rage and fury ; or which makes any change in the man, and exceeds the natural end of drinking and moderate refreshment ; is the sin of drunkenness. This ought to be well considered by those, who spend great part of their time in alehouses or taverns, at a friend's, or in their own houses, in drinking : for, though their constitution be so strong, as to preserve their wits longer than others ; yet their crime is not the less, if they drink as eagerly, and employ the same time in the work, as hath made another drunk. Reckon not, that your enjoyments are therefore innocent, because you are able to go away with a tolerable share of reason and understanding ; which is (in many cases) owing only to custom, or an uncommon strength of nature : but rest assured, that all indulgencies of this kind, more than what nature fairly requires, and more than what is a real refreshment to body and mind, without prejudice to health or business, are very sinful in the eyes of God ; and lay men under the same condemnation in kind, though not in degree, as drunkenness itself does. Therefore, whatever we find hurtful to our health, or is found commonly to make our bodies heavy, is to be avoided.

From these foregoing considerations, we may easily collect the great guilt of those who (instead of refreshing and relieving nature) abuse and mis-spend, what God has in his providence given us for good ends : and, as we must *The great guilt of strong drinkers.* one day account for such abuses, so he, who drinks longest, has the most of that guilt upon him ; besides the mis-spent time and the drunkenness of others in his company : but, if he strive to make them drunk, and triumph over their infirmity, and value himself upon it ; he is guilty of a most horrible wickedness. Let those therefore, who take pleasure in fuddling others, consider the woe, which God has denounced against so vile a practice : ' Woe unto him, that giveth his neighbour drink ;

‘ that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also!’ Dear price, for so short and foolish a pastime!

I have been the more particular, in describing this vice; as it is a sin, from which scarce any condition, age, or sex among us, is free. It is certain, there is no sin, more destructive to the understanding, health, reputation, and estate of those, who fall into it: according to the different constitutions of men, it usually produces, in some, a spirit of rage, and passion, and cruelty; in others, sullenness, obstinacy, and ill-nature; and in most, great folly and indecency in words and actions. It is with regard to the heinousness of this sin, the prophet Isaiah so solemnly denounceth woes and judgments against it: ‘ Woe unto them, that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until Night, till wine enflame them! Woe unto them, that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink!’ In the New Testament, the christians, guilty of this vice, are ranked amongst the most abominable sinners; and adjudged to the heaviest punishments, even to the exclusion from the kingdom of God.

Let as many, therefore, as have already indulged themselves into a habit, consider, that they are in a state of the worst kind of slavery; a slavery of reason, to appetite; a slavery of the human, to the brutal part: let them resolve once for all, to assert the freedom and dignity of their nature; and that, though they have lived like beasts, they will die like men: let them, in a religious way, look back; and see, how they have (in luxury and excess) abused the blessings of God; and with how much goodness he has borne their provocations and waited for their amendment: let a sense of his mercy, and of their own vileness, breed in their hearts that godly shame and sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation: and, if neither the force of reason nor religion will do, let the terrors of the Lord persuade them, not to trifle away their souls by continuing in a course, which they know must end so shortly in eternal destruction.

If they say, It is a difficult work; the proper answer is, That it is a necessary work: and, if men will but think,

think, it can bear no long consideration ; whether they shall be uneasy now, or miserable for ever. Where that is the choice, the true inference from the difficulty of the work is ; to rouse themselves to equal degrees of resolution, to go through it : and the more sensible they are, of their own weakness, the more earnest ought they to be, in their prayers to God, to strengthen and assist them. Take heed therefore, of giving way to intemperance, when it first appears : it insensibly steals on, to higher degrees ; and grows upon those, who give it admission. I could recount sad instances of persons, of the strictest sobriety and regularity, in appearance ; who from small beginnings, not restrained at first, have sunk into sottishness, and been entirely lost to the world and themselves, and consequently to God. It is a vice, which eats like a canker, and too often encreases with age ; which consideration should make young people cautious, of the least degree thereof : and its proper antidote is, not to be betrayed into it ; but to keep the reins over the appetite from the beginning, and to accustom it to frequent restraints ; that it may know, it is always under government, and so be tame and tractable : or (in the language of St. Paul in this very case) to keep under the body, and bring it into subjection ; to keep up, in our souls, the life and power of religion ; that our time and thoughts be well employed, that we may not be under the temptations of having recourse to sensual indulgencies to pass away our leisure hours.

The difficulties of forsaking it.

A caution to young people.

To the foregoing, we may add another difficulty, in the forsaking the crime of drunkenness ; which is an indolent idle life. Many, who can live (as they term it) on their substance, or upon credit, abhorring the thoughts of work, give themselves up to drinking, which at last becomes their trade and business : but, if they would seek for a suitable employ in their way of life, and be diligent in their proper stations ; neither those, who must live by their labour, nor others in easier circumstances, would spend their time in drinking. It may be, that a good resolution, of forsaking the wretched custom of drinking, may be

Want of employment.

The persuasions and reproaches of men.

be attacked by the persuasions and even reproaches of old pot-companions : but they, who resolve to become temperate, must foresee and expect, and therefore prepare against, such temptations ; which, they will be the better able to resist, by considering how much the everlasting kindness of God is to be preferred to the friendship of men ; and whether the reproach of wicked men be so terrible, as that of a guilty conscience, and the eternal confusion of an unrepenting sinner at the last day. In such cases as these, resolve, and say, with the royal Psalmist, ' Depart from me, ye wicked ! I will keep the commandments of my God.'

The security of resisting temptations at the very beginning.

Give not way therefore, to any of these temptations ; for, if a penitent once give ground, he certainly loses the victory. By returning to the company of drunken companions, he throws himself into the way of sins ; and they seldom fail, by force or intreaty, to drown his sober resolutions with a flood of excess : the greatest security lies therefore, in rejecting the first occasions of this sin ; and in openly declaring our purposes of living a sober life for the future, that men may be discouraged from attempting any future conquest. If men suffer themselves, to come into the way of excess, or go too near the brinks of it ; they will frequently loose the reins, and be plunged in unawares ; so that there is no way of being safe and innocent, but to keep an habitual guard and restraint upon the appetite. To these considerations should be added frequent and earnest prayer to God, to preserve upon our mind a lively sense of them, and graciously afford such supplies of grace and strength, as he sees needful to prevent those evil habits, and to give an effectual check to all such acts of irregularity and excess, as naturally lead to them.

Seeming necessity of drink.

V. When christians have taken all these methods, to avoid intemperance in meat and drink ; they will be convinced, that neither long custom nor engaging company will be able to resist the more powerful grace of God, working in a repenting heart. Who would not refrain from drinking, upon the advice of a physician, when he tells us it would endanger life ?

life? And can it be supposed, that the dread of death eternal, pronounced against great drinkers, is not sufficient to reclaim those, who duly consider their great danger? Though persons in this condition may be brought to acknowledge, that it would be happy for their body and soul, if they had fallen at first into a sober and regular course, yet now (as custom has made such indulgences necessary, and nature can hardly subsist without them) they think they may innocently go on, and that to part with them is to part with life: but to these I would observe, that although custom be very powerful, yet it has not force enough to make that necessary to nature, which of itself is destructive to nature; as all excess most assuredly is, whether with or without custom: so that, what they say is necessary to preserve life, is in truth only necessary to quiet a craving and inordinate appetite; the gratifying of which is, at that very time, the direct and immediate means of destroying life. As to the present uneasiness, it is no wonder, that an appetite unaccustomed to denials, and which has long been gratified to the full, should be so uneasy under the first check or restraint: but, if there be steadiness and resolution enough in us, to maintain the restraint for a little time; the appetite by degrees will grow more patient and quiet; and we shall find far greater pleasure in governing, than ever we did in indulging it. Whoever sincerely thus applies his heart, to forsake and avoid this sin, cannot fail of a conquest: the impossibility therefore, of breaking off a long habit of drunkenness is no excuse, but rather a proof of a false heart; which rather chuses to continue in sin, than to be at any pains to overcome it.

S U N D A Y XVI.

- I. Of Time, *how to be spent.* II. Of Sleep, *its end and rules; and the mischiefs of sloth.* III. Of Recreations, *how and when allowable; of religious Cheerfulness, the danger of Melancholy; and the sin and danger of common Gaming.* IV. Of temperance in Apparel, *the use*

use of Apparel and the danger and Folly of Fashions. V. Of CHRISTIAN Fortitude or Patience ; the comfort of Self-denial, and Mortification. VII. Of Zeal, both in a good and bad sense, how to be practised.

I. **T**HE Time, which God has given us for working out our salvation, is more valuable than can be expressed ; for, on the spending thereof, depends our happiness or misery to all eternity. *Of Time.* This consideration should put us upon all those methods, whereby we may employ it to the best advantage of our souls. There is little of it at our disposal : what is past is slipped from us ; the future is uncertain ; the present is all we can call our own, which is yet continually passing away : in which, though the season of working be very short and uncertain, we have an affair of the greatest consequence to secure ; which requires the whole force and vigour of our minds, and the labour and industry of all our days ; and is not to be dispatched with any tolerable comfort, upon a sick bed, nor in the evening of our lives, when our strength and our reason are departing. If therefore we persist, in an obstinate neglect of all the repeated tenders of God's grace ; the things, which belong to our peace may be hidden from our eyes.

All the time we can reserve, from the necessities of nature, and our worldly affairs, which those necessities engage us in, ought to be applied to the noblest purpose ; the glory of God, and the good and salvation of mankind: we should assign to all our actions their proper seasons, and such portion of our time only, as *How to be spent.* may be necessary for them ; whereby time will never lie upon our hands, nor sting us with remorse when it is gone. We are naturally active beings, and must be employed one way or other : we have a mind within us, which will always be in motion ; and this being the state of that active principle, which constitutes us Men, we had need take great care, to keep it employed in what is honest, just, and good : the soul will find something or other to work upon ; and, if it be not employed about what is honest and lawful, it will quickly divert the current of its motion, and exert its activity upon dishonest and

and unlawful things. Since the fall of man, God hath placed the generality of men in such circumstances ; that some honest calling, with diligence and industry therein, is indispensibly necessary to their comfortable maintenance : he hath so taken care to intercept our minds, that they may not fly off from the pure acts of religion into their contraries ; and that, when they are not better, they may be innocently employed ; and hath taken a wise course, to confine and restrain the soul from making incursions into sinful and prohibited actions : yet, not obliging us to be so industrious, as to deny ourselves moderate refreshments or recreations ; which are not only useful, but sometimes necessary to our spirits, after they have been stifled in a crowd of business.

God does not deny us refreshment.

II. The *third* part of TEMPERANCE is SLEEP. This is to be measured, by the rule of God's ordinance ; who gave us sleep, to refresh and support our minds and bodies, when wearied with toil and labour ; to repair their decay, and to enable them the better to perform their religious duties : it must therefore be always remembered, that this gift of God is, for us to profit thereby, and not to make us idle and slothful.

Of Temperance in sleep.

Though it be not possible, to describe the limited time every person may sleep ; because, as meat and drink, so sleep must be proportioned to the constitution of every body : yet let no one fall into the crime of Solomon's sluggard, who after a seasonable refreshment cries, ' A little more sleep ; a little more slumber ; a little more folding of the hands to sleep.'

Intemperance in Sleep draws us into several sins : by it, we waste our time, fill our bodies with divers diseases, dull the faculties of our soul, and so cross the end of our creation ; which is, to serve God in an active obedience, or a constant discharge of our duty in the state of life we are placed in by his providence. And, besides the sinfulness of Sloth, it will cover a man with rags : let him be in what state of life soever, poverty will overtake him, until he be destitute of convenient clothing. So that (as sleep is a kind of death) he, who indulges himself therein to excess, may properly

Sluggard's folly.

properly be said, to lay violent hands on himself, and to anticipate God's appointed time.

III. To what has been said of sleep, we may add a *fourth* part of TEMPERANCE in RECREATIONS: we should not turn our physick into food; nor make that our business, which should be only our diversion. Though a serious christian may (sometimes and at some seasons) use the common games, for the relaxation of his mind, and to oblige and divert his company; yet every sober man is to take care, that this liberty exceed not the bounds of an innocent recreation; for instance; that he set not his affections too much upon it, or play with such concern as to be put into a passion at his bad success; that he sit not too long at it, nor come to it too frequently; that he always prefer his necessary business, before his diversions; that he so order his recreations of this kind, as to enable him to spend his other time more usefully: and lastly, that he play not for money, but for diversion; at least for no more money, than what he can very well lose, without the least discomposure of mind, and without the least prejudice to his family or estate: thus far, and with these restrictions, to use play is innocent enough. Our recreations also must be short and refreshing; and must never be permitted, to steal away our minds, from the duties of our calling and election in Christ Jesus: for so far, as our sports exceed the measures necessary and convenient for our bodies, they are unwarrantable encroachments upon our religion and calling.

Yet there is a sort of men, who even made a trade of Gaming, whensoever they can find out company to their purpose: but whosoever makes this his way of living, has a sad account to make to God Almighty. Can there be a worse consumption of our time, or a greater abuse of our talents than to put both of them to no greater use, than the throwing a dye, or turning a pack of cards; especially, when it is attended with indecent and impetuous passions of all sorts; execrable oaths, imprecations, lyes, cheats, cozenages, and brutish quarrels and contests? How many estates have been broken and ruined? How many families, wives, and children, hath it

*The sin and
danger of
common
Gaming.*

it reduced, to the extremest degree of poverty and contempt ; nay, to an untimely end, by poison or a quarrel, or the gallows ?

Of the several kinds of gaming, the lowest and most vulgar seems to be that of laying wagers ; and it is not only low and vulgar, but too frequently dirty and knavish. *Of wagers.* When a matter of fact is disputed, laying a wager upon it may indeed serve to make an impertinent man pay the penalty of his ignorance ; but a generous good-natured man (much more a christian) will always scorn to take such an advantage : when neither party has any certainty, of what they dispute about, then a wager is folly in both ; and, when it is about events which depend either on providence, or what is ignorantly called chance, it becomes a kind of presumption bordering on madness.

As we are not to propose any other end to our recreations, than a bare relaxation of our tired spirits by moderate refreshment ; so our great care in them must always be, to use them *Undue ends of sports.* only at such times, when they cannot properly be said to fall in, with any part of our duty to God or our neighbour. Time is given us, in the first place to make our calling and election sure : so that they are highly culpable, who spend whole days and nights at cards and dice, or other idle pastimes ; or, through an avaricious temper, make a trade of gaming, and so cheat ; and when provoked, stain their souls with fury, rage, swearing, and cursing ; as woeful experience too often shews. Such a gamester stakes his soul, which is of too great a value to be ventured at such a rate ; and instead of recreation, loads himself with the greatest vexations : for the fears and desires of the covetous, and the impatience and rage of the angry man, are more real pains than the most laborious work in the world.

We should endeavour also, to keep up a constant Chearfulness of spirit. They disgrace religion, who pretend, it is an enemy to mirth and chearfulness ; or imagine it to be a severe exacter of thoughtful looks and solemn faces ; or, that men are never serious enough, until, they be sullen, or shut up from all company and recreations. *Chearfulness recommended.* Hours, wasted

wasted away in indulging an idle fullness or a moping melancholy, are no less placed to our account ; than those, which fly away unperceived in unthinking mirth and gaiety : it is the same thing, as to all religious intents and purposes ; whether our time be mis-spent in vanity, or in anguish and vexation of spirit. It has been a great artifice of the devil, to possess the minds of unthinking men with an opinion, that religion is a sour, morose, ill-natured thing ; an enemy, to whatever is pleasant and chearful ; and that, whoever engages in the practice of it, must from that instant renounce all the pleasures and enjoyments of this life : but, as the devil is the father of lyes, it is no wonder, he sets every thing before us in a false and deceitful light : he knows, there is such a beauty and comeliness in religion, as no one can behold, but with love and admiration ; and therefore he endeavours, to draw a veil over its lustre, and to raise in our minds frightful ideas concerning it : and too many (alas !) are misled by such false and unjust representations. Our Saviour was so far from giving religion a gloomy appearance, that the first miracle he wrought was at a scene of festivity, where he turned the water into wine : thus he, who gave and exemplified the strictest rules of life, gave a sanction to the innocent comforts and refreshments of it, A chearful and contented mind is a great blessing : without it, nothing in this world can make us happy ; and where shall a man obtain this, but in the practice of religion ? That will teach him, to resign his will to God, to submit to all the dispensations of his providence, and to be patient and easy, chearful and satisfied, under every disappointment and trouble he meets with ; as knowing, that God is the sovereign disposer of all things : and so long, as we keep within the bounds of sobriety, and do not fall out into malicious, scurrilous, or profane jesting ; our religion does not only wink at our mirth, but approves thereof. Chearfulness is nature's best friend, removes its oppressions, enlivens its faculties, and keeps the spirits in a brisk and regular motion ; it renders it easy to itself, and useful and serviceable to God and our neighbour ; dispels clouds from the mind, and fears from the heart ; kindles and cherishes in us generous affections ; and composes our nature into such a temper, as is of all
others

others the most fit to receive religious impressions and the breathings of the holy Spirit : whereas Melancholy naturally represses the Spirit of God, and disturbs his working within us ; overwhelms the fancy with black vapours, and clouds and darkens the understanding ; dis-tracts the thoughts, and renders them wild, roving, and incoherent ; makes them unfit for prayer and consideration, and renders them deaf and unattentive to all the good motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost.

Melancholy prevents the good influences of the Spirit.

IV. *Lastly* ; We must also be temperate in APPAREL.

This is a duty, which becomes us, as we are rational creatures ; but more especially, as we are members of the christian church ; being strictly obliged to avoid all kinds of excess, and in particular to put on modest apparel. If men be guilty of excess, the dignity of their sex encreases the fault, and makes it unpardonable : nature having designed them for the noblest employments, they undervalue themselves in studying dress and ornament ; and betray such a degeneracy of spirit, as exposes them to scorn ; such extravagancy in either sex is destructive of the public welfare. The lawful Use of apparel appears, in its conformity to the ends, for which cloathing is appointed ; to be a covering from shame, to defend us from the injuries of the weather, and to distinguish the orders and degrees of men : which ends once attended to, many would reduce themselves into a homelier dress, who make so gay an appearance in the vanity of rich habits, and strain both their purses and consciences to purchase them.

Of temperance in Apparel.

The first design of apparel (we read in Genesis) was to cover the nakedness of our first parents ; whose shame was the effect of the sin, by which they brought death into the world : we should therefore be so far, from delighting in apparel unbecoming us ; that it should be a constant check against all other offences, and teach us never to covet better apparel, than will serve to cover us decently. Yet many comply with every fashion, and suit their dress to all the changes : whereas Christians are bound, to abstain from all appearance of evil,

Apparel designed for a covering from shame.

evil, and avoid all approaches towards it ; to deny themselves the use of such ornaments, and forbear such gestures, as may give ground of suspicion to the censurer ; or whereby themselves may be tempted to pride, or their admirers to the lusts of the flesh.

But those are always guilty of excess in their apparel, who have neither quality nor any good design, to justify the wearing thereof ; who propose to themselves no other ends, but to set off their beauty, or to make such a figure, as may deceive the world in a false opinion of their greatness and honour, to which they have no title : yet they are as much exalted with it, in their own vain conceit, as if they had gained some real worth or power ; as their haughty looks, their insolent and scornful behaviour, plainly shew : which verifies the wise man's observation, that, ' A man's attire, excessive laughter, and ' gait, shew what he is.' Gay apparel has ever been observed to corrupt men, putting those upon extravagancies, who are otherwise sober and industrious : and though some be so much masters of themselves, as to retain their innocence with it ; yet frequently it tempts to sin, kindles lustful desires, and is too often worn for that very design. The over-curious in adorning the body commonly neglect their better parts ; though they shine in the eyes of men, their soul remains in darkness, in gross ignorance of their duty, or defiled with pride and all manner of uncleanness ; they not only employ their thoughts, but their time also, in this vanity : they spend so much at their glass, or in the dressing-room, or in making a show of themselves to company ; that there is none to spare, for performing the offices of religion and virtue.

Loose dress is destructive of many christian virtues ; especially Charity, which suffers much thereby. Those, who are so much taken up with love and admiration of themselves, have little disposition, to consider the straits and hardships of other men ; they can easily overlook their neighbour's poverty, and despise him for it : the most distressed object moves no compassion in them ; but, under this sense, they can hide themselves from their own flesh : nay, it is well, if they do no more than so : for
such,

*The folly of
excess in
Apparel.*

*Excess in
Apparel
dangerous
and sinful.*

such, as will pinch their bellies, and starve their families, to feed this vanity, are too often known to lie in wait, and catch the poor, when they can draw them into their net by any indirect means. They, who think rich apparel becomes them well, and that much happiness consists in it, if they have not estates to support it, will stick at no villainy whatsoever to gratify their pride. What shall we say of those, who run deep into the tradesmen's books, without any possibility of paying them; to which is owing the ruin of many families? Is not their dress a load of sin? What can be said, by way of excuse, for those; who are fine at their neighbour's cost, by means not very easily discovered; where bribery, extortion, breach of trust, and deceit in dealings, must bring in the supplies for their maintenance in apparel? This, of necessity, must bring many into straits and difficulties; who are immediately taught by the devil, to lay the blame of their credit's being sunk and lessened by this kind of profuseness, upon the times, the decay of trade, and scarcity of money; as the times of the greatest plenty can witness: since it is impossible, for art or industry, or the most gainful returns of trade, to answer all the unreasonable demands of luxury and pride.

The second end of apparel being, to defend us from the injuries of the weather, we ought only, to wear such clothing, as shall be necessary. *Fencing from cold.* to keep us from cold, and preserve the health of our bodies. They are, therefore, guilty of intemperance in apparel, who take such pride in their clothes, as, by regarding the fashions, to neglect and even prejudice their health; in which case cloathing, instead of being a benefit, hurts the body. But let not this be understood, to countenance those, who, out of a covetous temper of hoarding up riches, deny themselves the conveniencies of life; who contend, that it is utterly unlawful, to comply with the innocent and becoming fashions of their country, or to lay out any thing more upon clothing, than just what is necessary or sufficient to clothe them; who arraign others of pride and wastefulness, for putting on ornaments suitable to their rank and quality, and such as their circumstances will easily and honestly afford them: these pretended scrupulous notions

notions are not the fruits of christian instruction, but the signs of a narrow spirit; so that when they are taught for religious doctrines, they are no better than superstitious impositions; like those of the judaizing christians, who said, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not;' putting a restraint upon men in those things, which God and the laws of their country give them liberty to enjoy. Yet we must take care; lest, under the pretence of liberty, we go beyond our rank and degree; and despise those, who either through choice refuse to come up to the same excess, or whose circumstances will not allow them to do it: we must also shun all those loose kind of dresses, as have a natural tendency to raise lascivious and wanton thoughts.

Thirdly, Dress was intended, to distinguish the orders and degrees of men; and this in respect both of sex and quality. All nations have assigned a distinction of cloathing between man and woman; even as the Lord commanded the Jews, that one sex should not wear the dress of the other. In regard of men's quality, it is not blamed, but asserted; that they, who wear gorgeous apparel, live in king's courts: they have therefore the best pretensions to it; who excuse the vanity of rich apparel, by their birth and quality: who are in king's courts; who are about their prince, or have derived honours from him: but the noblest persons ought to consider, there are many better ways than this, of distinguishing themselves, and commanding the respect and observance due to them: there are many duties, which lay claim to their wealth; many great and generous actions are expected from them, as they are christians; they are bound to remember, that, by a solemn vow at their baptism, they renounce the pride of life, under the name of the pomps of the world: pride however is not the necessary effect of rich ornaments; for many wear them with no other design, than to keep up to their rank and dignity, that they may not appear covetous, nor seem to affect a greater pride in going beneath their station.

Men and women, of every state and condition of life, should never strive to exceed their fellows, much less their superiors, in the way of
Humility in dress.

of dress: for, if we believe every man's portion to be allotted by God's providence, and that all things shall work together for good to them that fear him; we shall easily be satisfied with the condition he has put us into; and shall like every thing, which is suitable or belonging to it: for, what God has appointed, must be the best for us; and how mean soever it be, we have no reason to be ashamed of it, since he is the great Lord and sole disposer of all we can enjoy. Mean and plain apparel is as becoming in a low estate, as a richer dress would be in a higher station; he, who disdains the one, would be as proud of the other: let us not therefore mind high things, but condescend to men of low degree; let us conform our way of living, to our circumstances; let us be content, and boast not of gay clothing or raiment: there is nothing in them, on which we ought to value ourselves; they answer well the uses, for which God designed them, to defend us from the weather, or to cover our nakedness: but it is folly to boast of that, which owes its value to our shame, our weakness, or natural necessities.

These several rules of temperance do in no wise countenance the vice of avarice or covetousness: whoever denies his body the necessities of life, suitable to his station, ability, and quality, sins against the goodness of God, by robbing his back, to fill his purse: the like may be urged against the slavish life of those, who moil and toil day and night; and, for the sake of what they never enjoy themselves, nor have any heart to do any good with, deprive their bodies of their nourishment, competent time of sleep, and necessary recreation. The covetous man therefore is not a temperate man; because it is not a regard to the duty of temperance, but an inordinate desire of riches, the root of all evil, which makes him refrain, and sacrifice his health, peace, conscience, life and soul, to save his purse.

SUNDAY XVI. PART II.

V. To the foregoing virtues of temperance, we may add those other duties of *christian resolution, patience, and self-denial.*

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First, Of christian FORTITUDE OR PATIENCE. Patience is that virtue, which qualifies us to bear all conditions, and all events, by God's disposal incident to us; and that with such apprehensions and persuasions of mind, with such dispositions and affections of heart, and with such external deportment and practice of life, as God and good reason require: with a thorough persuasion, that nothing befalls us, but either by the permission or direction of divine providence; a firm belief, that all occurrences (however contrary to our desires) are, both consistent with God's holy attributes, and conducive to our good; a full trust and dependence on him, either for strength to enable us to bear our afflictions, or for a seasonable removal or mitigation of them; abstaining from all discontented complaints and murmurings against providence, from all malicious and revengeful thoughts against the instruments of our sufferings, and from all unworthy and irregular courses to extricate ourselves from them; that so, suffering according to the will of God, we may commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. This duty is exercised, in bearing present evils, or waiting for future good, and the future blessed state of immortality: it is a disposition of mind, which keeps us calm and composed in our frame, and steady in the practice of our duty, under the sense of afflictions, or in the delay of our expectations: and it is this patience, with which Christ exhorts his disciples to possess their souls, after he had foretold them the sufferings and dangers they would be exposed to in the course of their ministry and christian warfare; and in them instructs us, that (in every circumstance, which tends to discompose us) we must always shew ourselves men, by permitting reason and grace to have the upper hand.

Why necessary. Diseases, pains, loss of friends, ingratitude, disappointments in our affairs, and all the various troubles to which man is born, fall to the lot of the good, as well as of the wicked. The deceitfulness of riches blinds men's eyes, the pleasures of life steal from them their understandings: power is very apt, to lead them into ambition and tyranny; plenty,

plenty, into intemperance; and continued prosperity, into a careless spirit, and a neglect and forgetfulness of God: so afflictions of all kinds, though for the present they cannot but be grievous, have naturally a tendency in the end, to lead men into sober thoughts and considerate counsels, to wean them from the numerous vanities and follies of the world, and to amend the habit and temper of their minds, by addicting them to the expectation of a better and more lasting state. Conclude not therefore, that, because God suffers thee to fall into many difficulties and afflictions; because thou art pressed with hard and pinching circumstances, and visited with sad and grievous losses, or with long and painful sickness, or with the death or miscarriage of thy nearest relations, or the like heavy misfortunes; do not hence conclude, that God is angry with thee, or that he hath no kindness for thee. The best of his children, he thinks fit to exercise in this way, for the trial and improvement of their virtue, for the exercise of their patience, for the correction of their faults, and for purging them; that they may bring forth more and more fruit, until we arrive at eternal rest and glory; which glory we can no more inherit without patience, than without an unfeigned faith and repentance.

We are convinced by observation, that few bear afflictions with due resignation. The man, who is touched in his reputation, declares, how willingly he would submit to any other affliction, which could befall him; but is not able to bear injurious reflections: the man, who is confined to his bed, complains, that his distemper makes him impatient and discontented, and prevents the practice of several good works he designed, if free from his illness: we may observe a woman, with a perverse husband and disobedient children, declaring she would willingly suffer any other affliction, except that which lies upon her; which she imagines, can only serve to encrease her misery, both in this and the next world. Every one seems willing, to exchange his present cross for another; and most think themselves unhappy, in the particular sort of their sufferings: which discontent renders their minds always unquiet, and their management unreasonable;

*In all states
and conditions.*

for, without doubt, God sends or permits that affliction: it does not spring out of the ground; neither must we determine, what God ought to do to us. How afflicting is it, seriously to reflect upon the sad, deplorable, calamitous condition of a great part of mankind in this world; to exhibit to our minds that dismal scene of things, which is every day presented to our eyes: Some are languishing under a long and tedious distemper; unfit for all the functions, and incapable of any of the enjoyments of life: others roaring out, in the extremity of torture they suffer from the stone, or gout, or an ulcer, or a broken limb, or some such other tormenting accident: others mourning, for the loss of a dear parent, on whom they depended; at the death of a child, who was the stay and comfort of their age: others fretting and fuming, for the disgraceful circumstances they are fallen into, from an high fortune: others even heart-broken, by the poverty and necessity, to which they are reduced through the profuseness of their lives, or the misadventures of trade, or the ruins of a fire, or the calamities of a war: others groaning and howling, under the whips and stings of an awakened conscience; being filled with horror, amazement, and despair, from the sense of their crimes, and the apprehensions of the vengeance of God in the other world. Yet we ought not to prescribe to him, the particular cross he shall lay upon us. Such thoughts must be banished from our mind; and we must receive the cross, which he sends us, with submission: though it be not, what we would have chosen for ourselves, we must obey; it is sufficient, that it comes from God. God hath so balanced and mixed adversity and prosperity together; that, upon a review of the whole, upon a full and impartial estimate of things, we can have no just grounds to arraign the conduct of providence: every man will find, he had more good fortune, than he deserved; and as much, as was beneficial to him; and no more ill fortune, than was necessary to correct his faults, moderate his affections, and exercise his virtues.

Let us be careful therefore, that the exercise of our patience be lasting: that it be a fixed habit, and not by starts; in great, as well as in small things.

It must be persevering.

in less trials ; and in small, as well as in great ; for sometimes impatience breaks out upon trifling occasions, after long patience in great and shocking calamities : but it should be unconquerable, in uncommon trials, as well as in those, to which we have been used. The great difficulty is, to act and think in some measure above the world, while poverty exposes us to the neglect and contempt of it ; to scorn, to build our fortunes on the ruins of our probity ; to despise the little injuries we receive, and to pity the little men that do them : little I mean in themselves, and in the eye of reason ; though they may be very great in the eye of the world, and perhaps much greater in their own eyes. A good conscience is a perpetual source of joy and comfort ; it gladdens the heart, cheers and refreshes the soul, and fills the mind with a constant serenity and cheerfulness ; which is infinitely to be preferred before the noisy mirth of fools and madmen. He, who is possessed of this inestimable jewel, has a treasure greater than all the riches of the Indies ; a treasure, which he always carries about with him ; and of which, neither the malice of the devil, nor the wickedness of men, can rob him : and so long, as he retains this fund of joy and comfort, he can never be truly miserable, unless he be wretchedly wanting to himself. As a good conscience gives a relish to all our outward enjoyments, so does it abate and take off the edge of the sharpest afflictions : it not only enables a man, to bear up under present evils ; but fortifies him, against the dread and apprehension of the future : it arms a man, with courage and resolution : and gives him such a firmness and presence of mind, as makes him able to endure the greatest shock. Happy will it be, if our master finds us in such a frame at his coming ; whenever it shall be, that he calleth us, to render an account of our thoughts, words, and deeds !

Such patience, as this, is its own reward : but Impatience is its own punishment ; because it lays aside the man, and sets up the brute or the devil : it leads us, to act a foolish or an outrageous part ; and, instead of abating, en-
The consequences of impatience.
 creases our sufferings : our burthen is lightened by patience ; whereas impatience, which pierceth the heart
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through with so many sorrows, doubles it. Complaints, murmurings, impatience and discontent offend God, and rob us of the profit and advantage of our sufferings for his name: to those, who submit with resignation, their virtue encreases; but to those, who murmur, their sufferings only serve to encrease those reserved for them in the world to come. Therefore bear with patience, and do not make yourself doubly miserable. It is scarce credible, that any man can be hardy enough, to complain against God; or dare to find fault with that providence, which he ought to adore and be thankful for: yet some insinuate, that he is severe, that he seemeth to abandon them, and that they do not deserve the treatment they receive: nay, some carry their discontent so high, as to break out into desperate expressions. Such people can never be convinced, that God is a kind and indulgent father, who chastises his children for their good; that he is a charitable physician, who prescribes bitter and distasteful remedies, for the recovery of their health: consequently they live without faith, without which there is no salvation. Thus the impatient becomes his own tormenter, and perplexes himself by needless discontents and inquietudes; he becomes insupportable to himself, robs his own soul of peace and quietness, and introduceth passion: an ill habit of mind, under which we should not presume to reply, or undertake any thing of consequence; because it clouds the understanding, and renders it incapable of acting for our good.

How to overcome impatience. In such cases, let the smoak fly off, and the troubled water settle; you will discover, what reason requires from you. When you find your anger boil, retire, change the discourse, or impose upon yourself an obstinate silence.

There are some, who take things so much to heart; who so highly resent the least thing, which has been done against them; that they make forgiveness a difficult work; whereas it is both our duty and interest. All trifles ought to be despised: if we dwell upon them, our imagination will encrease them; and the more we think upon them, the more intolerable they will appear. Patience is the only means of disarming this enemy: besides, it pleases and honours God; and keeps us in a posture, to receive a deliverance

deliverance from our troubles, or the accomplishments of our hopes. Those, who are continually complaining, that things run cross; that the world is much worse than it should be; have very great reason to complain, that there is one individual person in it much worse, than he should be; who cannot bear the accidents of life with tolerable patience, nor look upon mankind with common charity. When men are uneasy in themselves, they shift off the blame from themselves, upon the persons they converse with, and the times and places they live in.

VI. SELF-DENIAL (the other duty above mentioned) is a willingness to quit all earthly comforts, even life itself: and to undergo the greatest hardships, though they end in death; rather than, out of a fondness to this world, to do any thing contrary to the religion of Jesus Christ: that faith, which was once delivered to the saints. Because this is the only method, to secure the blessings of eternal glory; for, if we deny him before men, he will deny us before his Father, who is in heaven: 'choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;' that is (in a larger sense) denying even our innocent appetites, whenever they prove the means to hinder the practice of the greater acts of mortification.

Of self-denial or mortification.

The denial of our innocent appetites is instrumental, to the mortifying our sinful desires and disobedient affections; because, if we gratify them in all things, where we lawfully may, they will by long use and indulgence acquire a greater power over us, and then it may be a difficult task to deny them any thing: for, our appetites make no difference between an innocent and a sinful enjoyment; they are moved, only by pleasure: so that, if we will be sure to conquer and subdue them, in all instances which are sinful; we must take care, they grow not strong upon us in any particulars. Self-denial is (therefore) represented in scripture, by forsaking father and mother, by hating wife and children, by denying brother and sister, by quitting all we have, by laying down our lives, and bearing the cross of Christ.

Of innocent appetites.

We are engaged, by many and great Advantages, to practise this christian virtue. God hath promised to assist and support us by his Holy Spirit, in the discharge of this difficult duty: *Of great advantage.* he hath been graciously pleased to assure us, that he will reward the practice of it with greater degrees of eternal happiness; and nothing can be more reasonable, than to part with things of small value, for things infinitely greater. Moreover, the blessed Jesus, who requires it from us, hath given us the greatest example of Self-denial that ever was; and that, in pity and kindness to us, and wholly for our benefit and advantage; that, when we have paid the tribute of nature here, he may receive us through the gate of death into the mansions of eternal bliss hereafter.

VII. Having learned our respective duties towards God, our Neighbour, and Ourselves, and their opposite sins; with the means of practising the one, and of avoiding the other; let us be zealous in the faith; and continually labour, to enrich our souls with virtue, and (as much as in us lies) to root out all vice, not only from our own hearts, but where ever it is in our power, either by example or authority: this is also our duty; but, like all other christian virtues, is often misused. *Of zeal.* Zeal is an earnest concern for or against something, and a close pursuit of it: it is, in its own nature, indifferent, like the rest of the passions; *Good.* but it is good or bad, according to the object and degree thereof. It is used, in the holy scriptures, in a good sense; when it is applied to those things, wherein the honour of God and the salvation of men's souls are concerned: but it is used in a bad sense, when applied to a furious spirit of persecution; and to such contentions and divisions, as produce wrath and envy. *Bad.*

Christian Zeal is therefore right, in respect of its object; if, what we contend for, be certainly and considerably good; and, what we oppose, be certainly and considerably evil: if the measure and degree of it be proportioned to the good or evil of things, for which it is concerned; and if it be pursued and prosecuted, by lawful and warrantable means: *Christian zeal.* but

but no zeal for God and his glory, or for his true religion, will justify the doing of that, which in itself is evil or unjust. Zeal then becomes evil, when we violently contend for any doctrine, which is erroneous; and are more earnestly concerned for the externals of religion, than for solid and real goodness, which they are designed to work in us: when it betrays us, to the breach of any of God's laws, in order to promote his glory; and creates divisions and schisms in the christian church: and, when we prosecute even truth itself, without that meekness and charity, which are a part of the character of a good christian. We have the more reason to take care, how we govern our zeal; because Moses himself, who was distinguished for his meekness, was so provoked by his zeal for God, at the waters of Meribah, that he spake unadvisedly with his lips: so that, if our zeal for God be not well tempered, we may (like that great prophet) break the tables of the law, and throw them out of our hands, through zeal for their preservation.

Our zeal should be shewn, not by fire and faggot; nor by excommunications, threatened against those we suppose to pervert or mistake the word of God: but by earnest prayer to God for their *How to be practised.* conversion, that he would bring into the way of truth all such, as have erred and are deceived: by shewing such kindness to their persons, as may dispose them to receive the impressions of such arguments, as we offer with meekness for their amendment; and by abstaining from all reproachful and bitter reflections, which prejudice them against the truth; by exercising all acts of charity towards them, which is the only moderation due to those, who differ from us in religious matters; without yielding any necessary point of faith, through too much complaisance: for, though we behave to them as brethren, in kindness and gentleness; yet we must not imitate their ways, but be followers of the Lord, and oppose firmness in the faith to their errors. Yet, when they lie under the censures of the church, we should keep at a distance from their conversation; and, when all methods have in vain been used for their recovery, be careful to avoid any infection. Yet rigorous corporal punishments, and infliction of death upon these accounts,

are contrary to the spirit of the christian religion, and inconsistent with many of the chief principles thereof; for the gospel of our Saviour engages us, to shew meekness to all men, and universal love and good-will even to our enemies: no difference of religion therefore, nor any pretence of zeal for God, can justify a spirit of rage, malice, and vengeance.

SUNDAY XVII.

- I. *Of Death and its Advantages to Man.* II. *How we should number our Days: of Repentance and an habitual preparation for Death.* III. *Of the Hindrances of a good preparation; with advice, for the disposal of our worldly affairs, a disregard of the world, patience in sickness, submission to God's will; and of the advice and assistance of a minister.* IV. *In what the Death of the righteous, and the length of man's Life consist; with the advantages of Piety, and the disadvantages of a long Life.* V. *Of the means to improve our lives; and of a middle state.* VI. *Why Death is terrible both to the natural, and to the spiritual Man: why many desire to live long in this world.* VII. *Of the height of christian perfection, and the danger of delaying our turning to God.*

I. **T**HESE instructions, given to enforce the *Whole Duty of Man* (which consists, in a sincere and lively faith in God the Father, through Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; and a perfect obedience to his commands, revealed to mankind in the gospel) may serve, as so many guides, through the rugged paths of this troublesome and sinful world, to the confines of eternal glory; and as so many timely supports, against the anxiety, sorrow, and temptations, which attend mankind, when death calls us from the stage of this life.

Death. DEATH is no more, than a separation of the soul and body: the soul returns, into the hands of God its Creator; and the body to dust, of which

Sund. 17.] *Of Death and its Uncertainty.* 419

which it was made : not, that by dying we cease to live ; for our soul is of an immortal nature, and our bodies shall be raised incorruptible. This death is entailed on all, by our first parents ; for in Adam we all die : it is a sure debt, we must all pay to nature in our corrupt state ; and the daily examples of mortality are constant proofs, that death is not far from every one of us : for (as the Psalmist observes) the days of our age are threescore years and ten ; and though, by reason of strength, they be fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow ; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone ! This is the ordinary period of human life, when it is spun out to the greatest length ; within this term therefore we may with reason expect to die.

*Is common
and near
unto all
men.*

How much of this time we shall run out ; how soon, or how late we shall die, we know not. No age is exempt from death : we see some expire, in the cradle, and at their nurse's breast ; others, in the heat and vigour of youth ; others, outliving their families to a decrepit old age ; and a great many often surprized by death, when they least think thereof : this should convince us, that the time of our death is a secret belonging unto God, and therefore hidden from our sight. God (however) has not, by any absolute decree, determined how long every man shall live ; that is, restrained by no condition : yet, if a sparrow fall not to the ground, without our Father ; much less shall man die, without his appointment or permission. A special providence appears, as well in the death, as in the birth, of every one, that is born of a woman : no man can destroy himself, but by God's leave ; neither can any disease kill, but when God pleases ; nor any mortal accident befall us without God's appointment : the plague, the pestilence, the famine, the sword, fulfil the will of the Lord ; and, by his particular commission, execute his vengeance upon the obstinate and the wicked doer : on the contrary, the most savage rage and fury of men cannot, without God's particular permission, take away our lives.

*The Uncertainty of
Death.*

This lays us under a perpetual obligation, to serve God, and to please him in all our ways : this secures us, from

from all dangers, and from the fears thereof ; is an assurance of our hope, that God will hear our petitions, when we pray for the deliverance of ourselves or our friends, from danger, trouble, sickness, or temptation ; and should make us, as willing to part with this veil of flesh, as to seek for a remedy to remove a film from the eyes of our body. Were death more intolerable, than the afflictions, which daily pursue human nature ; were the comforts and pleasures of this life more desirable and happy in their consequences, than what God has reserved, for his servants, and his children by adoption in Christ Jesus ; both the rich and the poor, both the easy and heavy laden, might pray for a longer continuance upon earth : but, through death and the grave, we must pass ; before we can enjoy perfect happiness.

An instance of God's wisdom and goodness. Thus is God's wisdom and goodness wonderfully displayed, in reserving to himself the number of our days ; such a knowledge in man could be no means, of making his present state more conformable to the gospel of Christ ; the heart is so hardened against those means of salvation, which God has appointed, when it is not sure of living a moment longer : and should God vouchsafe to reveal to any one, that his life is confined within the narrow bounds of one short night, or limited to the end of fifteen years ; it would chill the blood, and sink the spirits, of the strongest man ; and the pleasures and comforts of his remaining life would be overcast, as of one under sentence of death without hopes of a reprieve.

In regard to young men. Should young men, who are cut off in the midst of their hopes of living a long life, know the certain time of their death ; and be certain, that twenty or thirty years were to be the days of their whole life : they would never trouble themselves, in the pursuit of trades and learning ; nor concern themselves with this world any more, than just to live so long therein. This would be a certain means, of thinning the seminaries of arts and sciences : none would toil and labour, did they know, that the immediate product thereof would so soon be taken from them by death, and given

given to another : nor is it reasonable to think, that any parent would be at so great expence, as attends a child's instruction in the languages, arts, and sciences ; if he knew, that he must die, as soon as he had attained the knowledge of them. In a word, such a knowledge, of the certain time of our death, would be an insupportable mischief to all communities ; and would destroy half the world, by destroying the industry and improvement of half mankind.

The searchers after unrevealed knowledge urge, that these inconveniencies to society are super-
feded by the great advantages, which may *An objection.*
follow from a certain knowledge of the precise time of our death : namely, that it would prompt many young men to spend their days in piety and devotion, and to make the next world their care ; and would thereby secure the salvation of many thousands, who are now eternally ruined (not by want of this knowledge, but) by youthful lusts and vanities.

These men are like the rich man in the gospel ; who being in torment, begged that Abraham *Answered*
would send Lazarus from the dead, to persuade his brethren to repentance ; and should therefore receive Abraham's answer. They, who live in this world, are taught by God's holy word, that their time is short in this world ; that man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live : and that, when death brings them before the judgment-seat of Christ, they shall be judged according to their behaviour towards God and man in this world : so that they, who have done good, shall go into life eternal ; and they, who have done evil, into eternal fire. Did they know then the certain time of their death, they would live and die full as bad ; as they do now, in this state of uncertainty : for, if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

It cannot be denied, but the heat and extravagance of Youth might be sooner corrected, and *In regard to Youth.*
heaven and hell more exactly represented, by this means : but God does not think fit to do either ; it offers too much force and violence, to
the

the freedom of man's will. It should be considered, that our abode on earth is a state of probation : we are created, to live virtuous lives, to reverence our God ; and to conquer the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the power of faith : therefore, as God hath set before us both good and evil, and will enable us to chuse the good, he will not force any man : he has given the gospel, for our trial and discipline ; and if the certain hopes and fears of another world, and the uncertainty of our living here, revealed by his word, will not conquer these flattering temptations, and make men seriously religious (as those, who must certainly die, and go into another world, and they know not how soon) God will not try, and is not in justice bound to try, whether the certain knowledge of their death will make them wise unto salvation. It is a sufficient reason for young men, to expect death and to prepare for it in the days of their youth ; that they are convinced, by thousands of examples, that they may die young : therefore if they will venture, and eternally miscarry by their wilful delays ; they must take their chance, and not say, they had no warning of their dying young. The merciful God will accept of repenting prodigals ; he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live : yet he cannot in justice encourage us in sin, by giving us notice of the hour of our death ; which would only serve to put off our repentance, until death stare us in the face ; which is the worst time, for so weighty and important a work.

As there is found no reason in favour of youth, neither can there be any assigned, why this knowledge should be granted to old age ;
In regard to old age. on the contrary, we may now observe, while life and death is in this state of uncertainty, that the very flattering ourselves with the hopes of a long life, is apt to make us too desirous of a continuance thereof : this is often found, to weaken the hopes and fears of the next world, by removing it to too great a distance from us ; and to encourage men to live in sin, while they imagine they have time enough before them, to indulge their appetites, to repent of their offences, and to make their peace with God, before they die. If the uncertain hopes

hopes of this undo so many, what can be expected, from the certain knowledge thereof? It may be feared, that even they, who are too wise to be imposed on by such uncertain hopes, might be conquered by the certain knowledge of the distant time of their death: such a fore-knowledge would take off all restraints from men; who, how wicked soever they might be, would naturally give a free scope to their vicious inclinations, did they know, they could never be surprized by death: besides, it would destroy one great motive to obedience; as it is written, 'The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened;' for, 'the wicked shall not live out half their days.' These, and the like promises and threatenings, must be struck out of the Bible; should it be revealed to every particular man, how long he has to live: And, whereas now public calamities (plague, famine, and the sword) alarm a wicked world, summon men to repentance, and reclaim sinners, and sometimes a dangerous or painful fit of illness awakens men, to an abhorrence of their former wickednesses, and settles a true, sincere, and continuing repentance, in their hearts; those means, by which the goodness of God exhorts us to turn unto him, would all prove insufficient, did men know the certain end of their life, and that they should not die under any of those public judgments, or be bowed down to the grave by their present distempers.

Let us therefore thank the Almighty, that he has hidden the hour of our death from our mortal eyes; and so improve the uncertainty of our lives, as God did intend we should, in a constant watchfulness against sin, and in an early and persevering course of virtue; that, when we shall depart out of this world, we may be judged worthy of life everlasting: let us confess without wavering, that to know when we shall die, would serve no good end; but would only tend, to increase the too luxuriant wickedness of mankind: which is a sufficient vindication, of the wisdom of God; who has reserved to himself the knowledge of that particular time, when man shall be called from time to eternity. Seeing then, we are certain, that we cannot live above threescore or fourscore years, or some few

*Our duty on
this account.*

few years over or under; we should not extend our hopes, expectations, and designs, beyond this time, which God has fixed for the conclusion of our abode upon earth. We ought not to live, as if we were immortal; it is also unreasonable for us to trouble ourselves about this world, longer than we are like to continue therein. Did men only consider, how long they may or can live; would they set bounds, to their necessary provisions here upon earth; they might see some end of their labour, cares, and riches, and of adding house to house, and field to field: whereas, in the present practice of covetous nature, mankind drudge on to the last moment they have to live, heaping up riches, without knowing who shall gather them; or, as if their lives, and their enjoyments of them, were also never to have an end. A competent provision for children is indeed a just reason for continuing our industry, though we have enough for the natural course of our own lives; but to labour to leave them rich and great, is rather an excuse than a reason; because great riches are too often the child's misfortune, who, not being trained up in the paths of righteousness, has been too much pampered in the ways of the world: whereas it is the piety of our parents, which entails a blessing on their posterity; and an industrious and virtuous education is a better inheritance for children, than a great fortune. Nay, it is observed, that men, who are so intent, to the very last stage of their life, on the increase of their estates, seldom do it for any other reason, than to gratify their own insatiable thirst of hoarding up riches for a time when they cannot enjoy them; and of providing for their own living in this world, a much longer time, than they know they can possibly live therein.

II. As God has vouchsafed to reveal to us the common end of human life, we should so number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom; to observe the continual waste of our lives, and how they daily draw to an end. Before we can attain that happiness, which Christ has purchased for us, we must fit and prepare ourselves for a holy and happy death; in which we ought to use the greatest care and caution; because a mistake in this matter is never to be recalled.

recalled. Men can die but once ; and death will certainly translate us to endless joys, or consign us to everlasting torments : so that nothing can be wiser, than to take such measures, as may prevent this, and secure that.

Consider this, all ye that forget God ; lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you : *What is the best preparation for death.* consider it, before all opportunities of reconciling yourselves to an offended God be taken away, and the door of hope be for ever shut against you. Listen to the threatnings of God's holy word, the admonitions of his blessed Spirit, and the checks of your own consciences. Set about the great work of your salvation to-day, while it is called to-day ; before the night cometh, when no man can work : for, though ye may now be in health and strength, in the prime and vigour of your years, surrounded with the pleasures of a great and splendid fortune ; yet the time is coming, and, (whether ye think of it or no) will hasten on apace, when ye must take your leave of all that is desirable on earth ; and nothing will then stand you in any stead but a good conscience ; neither honours, nor riches, nor any thing else, that men are now so fond of, will then be able to give you one moment's ease, or afford you one comfortable thought. The best preparation for death is the constant exercise of piety and virtue in the whole course of our lives : this is the only armour, which is proof against the attacks of that dreadful enemy to nature : so that men strangely delude themselves, who depend upon any other method than that, of keeping a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. The sinner, however he may now trust in the multitude of his riches, and strengthen himself in his wickedness ; must then let go all his dependencies, and descend into the regions of darkness without hope, and (what is yet more terrible) with dreadful expectations. Of what infinite moment is it then to us all, so to live ; that, when the time appointed for our great change shall come, we may meet death without fear and astonishment ; and, with an humble confidence, may look up to God in an assured hope of his mercy in Christ Jesus ? Whosoever therefore would make death safe and happy, must reconcile himself to God ; by a sincere and hearty repentance, and a true faith

faith in Jesus Christ ; unto which we should immediately apply ourselves, lest sickness and death overtake us, before we have accomplished so necessary a work.

Though a Death-bed may be a proper season, to renew our repentance, and to trim our lamp ; yet it is the most unfit time to begin it ; and it very rarely then (if ever) takes effect : * for we can never have any security, that a late repentance is hearty and sincere. A man may very well, at the amazing approach of death and judgment, be extremely sorry, that he has lived wickedly ; he may strongly wish, that he had lived the life of the righteous ; and resolve, if he were to live over again, that he would do so : yet all this may be merely the passion, and not at all the duty, of repentance ; which is an entire change of mind, and an effectual reformation of life : but the passion of sorrow and remorse is such, as accursed spirits shall be for ever tormented with in vain ; and such, as a dying penitent can never be secure, that his late repentance will exceed. It is true, indeed, this is all, that a man (who has led a wicked life) can do, when he comes to die ; and it would be well, for his own sake, and for the sake of his sorrowful friends and relations ; that he would do thus much, and not go out of the world hardened and unrepenting ; for who knows, how far infinite mercy may be extended ! But, surely, it must be allowed to be the greatest instance of folly and madness, to venture a matter of such infinite moment upon so uncertain an issue ; upon a few broken, confused, and almost despairing sighs and groans : for, if the dying agonies and horrors, the solemn vows and resolutions, of such men, should not prove a true godly sorrow, a repentance to salvation not to be repented of ; as no man living can say, they certainly will ; they are lost and undone to all eternity.

Supposing a late repentance to be hearty and sincere ; yet we have no positive and absolute promise, that it shall be accepted of. The plain and express condition of the covenant established by Christ is a holy life ; that is, a constant and

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* See The christian duty of repentance, Sunday 7. Sect. VI.

persevering obedience to all the commands of God, from the time of our baptism, or of our coming to the knowledge of the truth, unto the end of our lives ; and the least that can possibly lay claim, to the reward promised upon this condition, is such a repentance, as produces the actual obedience of at least some proportionable part of a man's life. To say therefore, that the original condition of the christian covenant is such, that a man may safely live wickedly all his life, and satisfy all his lusts and appetites to the utmost, provided he does but leave off and forsake his sins at the last ; to say this, is really to take away the necessity of a holy life, and to undermine the very foundation of all virtue. Though God may possibly have reserves of mercy, which in event he may exercise towards men in their last extremity ; yet it is certain, the gospel covenant originally gives no assurance of comfort, but either to a constant and persevering holiness, or to a repentance evidenced by actual renewed obedience.

Let those men, who resolve to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season here ; and yet hope, by a late repentance to get a share also in the eternal rewards of virtue hereafter : let them consider, *A caution to sinners.* that they may be cut off, in the midst of their hopes ; or that they may be as unwilling to repent hereafter, as they are at present : for a man by a long course of wickedness, may arrive at such an hardened state, as to be incapable of any sensible impressions ; his soul may be seared, as it were, with an hot iron, and be fallen into such a deep and fatal lethargy, as that nothing perhaps shall be able to awaken it, until it feel the very torments of the damned. But above all, let them consider ; that, though they should live to that time, when they shall be willing to leave their sins, because the strength of their temptations will cease ; yet they cannot be sure, that God will then accept them. Suppose it to be possible, which is often not the case ; yet what is this, but to deal with God, as you would with an enemy ; to whom, when you have held out as long as possible, you then surrender yourself, and make the best terms you can ? And can you think, that your Maker will be tamely put off after such a manner ? If you would save your soul alive, it is not enough

enough, that you do not labour under a complication of vices ; one habitual vice, one inveterate distemper of mind, will prove a sickness unto death ; if you do not make it your endeavour to be cured of it. The express condition of the gospel is, that we seek first the kingdom of God, that we deny ourselves, and that we overcome the world ; and the threatnings, which the scripture denounceth against those, who refuse to hear the voice of God when he calleth, and to seek him whilst he may be found, are terrible to impenitent sinners : for, he will by no means clear the guilty, nor can by any application be reconciled to sin : no bribe, no force, no artifice, no intercession, no length of time, can change his hatred towards unrighteous actions, or hinder him (without true repentance and effectual amendment) from punishing unrighteous men : His wisdom, his honour, his goodness, obliges him, to preserve the dignity of his laws and government ; and it is therefore a dreadful thing for wilful sinners, to fall into the hands of the ever-living and ever-unchangeable God. Let those therefore, who have yet the time before them, consider, what they have to do ; let them be careful, to hearken unto the voice of God to-day, while it is called to-day : let them be zealous, to improve that time and those talents, wherewith God hath blessed them ; that, when their Master cometh, he may find them so doing, and bid them (as having been good and faithful servants) enter into the joy of their Lord : let us consider these things ; and while we rightly maintain, that true repentance cannot at any time be in vain or ineffectual to procure pardon ; let us be careful, not to entertain any such notions of repentance, as will take away the necessity of an holy life, and of that persevering obedience, which is the express and indispensable condition of the gospel covenant.

Even they, who are ready to welcome death by an habitual preparation, and have governed their lives under the conduct and influence of the thoughts of dying long before ; even they must not rest in the decline of their days, in too great a security : they have not yet perfected the great work of salvation, which we are all sent into the world to finish, under Jesus Christ, the great author thereof. They must there-

Of habitual Preparation.

therefore remember, that there must be a solemn preparation for it, or a thorough review of their lives and actions : they must make their peace, with God and their own consciences ; by examining, whether there be any sin, which they have not sincerely repented of, and heartily begged God's pardon for ; whether they have made restitution and reparation, as far as in their power, for injuries done to their neighbour ; whether they be in love and christian charity, with all men ; whether they have formerly been too negligent of their duty, in charity to the poor, in the education of their own children, and the support of their families ; and in such like duties, required in their proper station of life : and they must henceforth apply themselves, to a more diligent discharge thereof, by rectifying the distempers of their minds, mortifying disorderly passions, and improving that grace which God giveth bountifully to all men. They, who thus prepare themselves for death, will have great hope and assurance in their latter end.

Let us not reckon upon living threescore years and ten, or fourscore years ; when (very likely) thirty or forty, the best half of our lives, are already *In all times of our life.* past away. Would men but seriously think upon this, they would not be so apt to flatter themselves with the hopes of a long life : for no man accounts twenty or thirty years a long life ; yet that is the most they, who are come to the decline of age, have to live, though they should be prolonged to the longest term of a common duration : much less then should they hope for a long life, when probably ten or fifteen years must balance the account with nature. What shall we say then of those men, who draw near the end of their reckoning ; or, perchance, who have already spun out the common thread of human life ? These should (as the world expresses it) be doubly diligent in their preparation for the approaching dissolution of their body and soul ; which, how vigorous soever their constitution may appear, cannot be at a great distance. These, who have already attained to the common measure of human life, and are already in the borders and confines, or rather the very quarters of death, are unpardonable, if they are deceived with the hopes of living much longer.

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By a thorough knowledge of the state of our own souls, we shall enjoy peace and satisfaction of *Its advantages.* mind; and not only deliver our consciences from guilty fears, but even disarm death of its stings and terrors, by reforming whatever was amiss: for the sting of death is sin; and, when this sting is pulled out, we have nothing else to contend with, but some little aversion from dying, which is more easily overcome by the joyful prospect of eternal glory; which waits, on the brink of eternity, to receive those who die in the Lord: especially, if we consider, what a blessed place it is; where we shall be delivered, from all the fears and sorrows and temptations of this world; where we shall see God and the blessed Jesus face to face, and converse with angels and glorified spirits, without fear of dying any more: where there is nothing, but perfect love, joy, rest, and peace; no cross interest and factions, to be contended with; no storms, to ruffle and disturb our joy and rest for ever: where there is no pain, no sickness, no labour; no care, to refresh the weariness, or to repair the decays of a mortal body; nor so much, as the image of death, to interrupt our pleasures for evermore. Then we shall serve God; not after the manner of men, with dull and sleepy and unaffecting devotions; but with piercing thoughts, ravishment and transport, life and vigour.

III. Some men, who converse much in this world, are *The hindrances of a good preparation for death.* so distracted with the cares and business of it, and live in such a hurry; when they have discharged one obligation, another pressing hard upon them; that in the morning they have no time to beg God's blessing, and scarce spirits left to say their prayers at night: nay, the Lord's day itself they think more proper, for rest and refreshment for their bodies and feeble spirits, than (as it ought to be) for devotion towards God, who has sanctified it to his own name, and for his peculiar service. Such men alas! can have but very dull apprehensions of another life: though we take all the care we can, this world will insinuate itself into our affections, when our whole business is buying and selling, and driving good bargains: such a hurry disorders our passions, occasions feuds and quarrels; and gives us such a tincture of covetousness, ambition,

ambition, and pride ; that there is work enough after a busy life, to root out the love of this world, and to settle our whole desire on a future happy state.

We must also set our house in order, by a prudent and pious disposition of our worldly affairs : that requires time and consideration, to do it well ; and therefore cannot so well be dispatched, in our last moments, when our minds are disordered, our bodies oppressed with pain and sickness ; and, when we run the hazard of being imposed upon by those, who out of interest diligently attend us on those occasions. Perhaps we may, in some measure, be free from those inconveniencies ; yet the little time we shall then have to live, is too precious, to be consumed about the vanities we are going to leave. Wherefore, except we make our wills in the days of our health, that matter possibly may never be performed ; or after such an imperfect manner, as to convey strife and contention to our posterity ; and at best, when we are least able to bear it, to give great trouble and disorder to ourselves : so that such a will is too often the will of those about us, rather than our own intentions. We ought to have thought and consideration, to dispose of our estates in a christian manner ; to give children their fitting portions, to acknowledge the kindness of our friends, to reward the services of our dependents, and make distributions for the poor and needy : and all this in so clear a manner, that no differences or law-suits may thence arise, among those we leave in the world. For which purpose the church * hath wisely directed the minister, when he attends the sick person (if he ' have ' not disposed of his goods) to admonish him, to make ' his will, and to declare his debts ; what he owes, and ' what is owing to him ; for the better discharging of ' his conscience, and the quietness of his executors : ' withal acknowledging, that men should often be put in ' remembrance to take order for the settling their temporal estates, while they are in health,' both in body and mind.

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* See the visitation of the sick.

It is farther necessary, to make us die with comfort and satisfaction, that we wean our affections *Disregard of the world.* from the things of this world : our concern at parting with them will always bear a proportion, to the love and esteem wherewith we have enjoyed them ; and, to be separated from objects, upon which we have fixed our hearts, must be attended with great uneasiness and regret. We should therefore accustom ourselves, to resign freely to God, what death will snatch from us by force ; and gently unite those knots, which fasten us to the world ; that we may have less pain, when they are to be entirely dissolved. To this end we ought to be less concerned for the things of the body, and all bodily pleasures ; to expect, with submission to the will of God, the success of our temporal affairs ; to suppress all ambitious and covetous desires ; to retrench sometimes the use of lawful pleasures ; * to abound in works of charity ; to be most ready to part, with what we love most, when God thinks fit ; and to bear all losses and afflictions, without murmuring and repining : so that we may be able to say, ‘ we die daily ; ’ not only, because the time of our death is every moment approaching ; but also, because we daily find less fondness for life, less earnestness for trifles, less desire of applause, less eagerness for profit, and less concern for whatever is most esteemed by the world. As the days of our pilgrimage here upon earth must draw to an end (which were given us, to glorify God both in our souls and bodies, to do good unto all men, and to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling) we should use great care, not to spend all our short time, in improper visits, or in vain diversions, or in sloth ; as if mirth and doing nothing were the business of our mortal state. If we be settled in a calling, let us manage it with justice and diligence ; always remembering, we have a christian calling of greater importance : if we be not engaged in the world, let us chuse such circumstances, as we shall most approve of in a dying hour : if we have great estates, and the advantages of power and understanding, let us look upon ourselves, as under the greater obligations to spend our time well ;

* See temperance in recreations, Sunday 16. Sect. III.

well; because, in such circumstances, there is greater capacity and leisure to attend the good of others, as well as our own salvation.

Immediate preparation for death consists, in bearing our sickness, that precedes it, with a true christian frame and temper of mind; with *Of patience in sickness.* great patience under our sufferings, and resignation of mind to the will of God; with a firm trust and dependence upon his infinite wisdom and goodness, and with thankful acknowledgments of those mercies, with which he allays the sorrows of our distemper, and lightens the burden under which we labour; carefully restraining all murmuring against God, or any discontent, by reason thereof; watching against all the temptations to anger, such as the mistakes and inadvertencies of those about us, the unseasonable kindness of our friends, the disagreeableness of our medicines, and such-like; curbing anxious fears of worse, than may come to pass: and being content to wait God's time for our deliverance, we must quiet our minds *Submission to God's will.* under the apprehensions of future evils; by considering, that we are in the hands of a good God; who will lay no more upon us, than we are able to bear; and who will, in his due time, either remove what afflicts us, or give us strength to endure it in such a manner, that it may contribute to the improvement of our virtue here, and to the increase of our happiness hereafter: so that, however destitute we leave our nearest relations, as wife and children; yet we must consider, they are under the protection of providence, whose blessing is the richest portion, and without which the best human prudence is no safeguard: we must rest fully assured, that what God chuses for us, is much better, than what we could wish for ourselves, were we left to our own choice: we must embrace our sickness and our pains, as the chastisement of our past follies, and as the proper means of our growth in grace, and of the love of God; and be contented, to refer the continuance and event of our sicknesses to God's good pleasure: because his infinite wisdom knows the best season for our deliverance; and as he first

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puts us into this world, so he is fittest to judge when we should go out of it. •

Neither must we forget, to desire the assistance of a spiritual guide, to offer up our prayers, and to support our weakness with the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper; spiritualizing all the accidents of our sickness, making them a ground of pious and devout thoughts, which may be sent up in frequent ejaculations to God, who alone can be our comfort under all our distress; imploring his blessing, upon all the means we use for our recovery; and offering to him all the pains we endure, as what we are willing to suffer, rather than offend him.

SUNDAY XVII. PART II.

IV. It must indeed be owned, that Death is the great king of terrors; that the dissolution of soul and body, and the thought of becoming a prey to the devouring worms, carries in it something very shocking to human nature: yet, to a good man, Death appears, in a quite different view. He considers; that, to leave this world, is only to quit a place of trouble and vexation, of vanity and emptiness: it is, to leave a barren and dry wilderness, where no water is, for the delightful regions of bliss and happiness; where there are rivers of pleasure, and a never-ceasing spring of endless comfort, which will satisfy the most longing desires of the soul. Thus the happiness of the death of the righteous does not consist, in any freedom from painful and noisom diseases; nor in any exemption from sudden and unforeseen accidents and dangers, which often bring the righteous (as well as the wicked) to their graves: this we learn, not only by experience, but in the case of Lazarus, for whom was prepared a retreat in Abraham's bosom; yet he had his body full of sores, and ended his life in a miserable and forlorn condition; while the rich man, whose luxury had kindled for him inextinguishable flames, only grew sick and died. The happiness then, of the good man's death, doth not consist

consist in freedom from pain and noisom diseases ; but it is distinguished by the temper and disposition of his mind, and is founded on a well-grounded hope and comfortable expectation of a blessed immortality, through the merits of Christ's death, promised to a sincere, though imperfect obedience to his law : such a temper makes him contented to quit that body, which he hath always mortified ; and to leave this world as a strange land, where he hath been detained a prisoner : and such, as desire to be expert in all the devout acts of a pious soul upon the approach of death, will set apart some time in their retirements, to fit and prepare themselves for death, by a solemn exercise of all those virtues, of which christians shall then most stand in need ; that they may not be at a loss to perform them, when they become weak and languishing. The evenings of such sundays and holidays, whereon we receive the blessed sacrament of the Lord's supper, may properly be dedicated to so good and necessary a work ; by which, when we really come into the confines of death, our minds may be stored with devout thoughts ; and may readily express themselves in those pious acts, which we frequently exercise, upon such a prospect of our certain dissolution, or departure from this world.

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Thus, we see, the life of man is fixed and determined by God ; and that this term of life is but very short, at the utmost extent thereof : threescore and ten, or fourscore years, soon pass away ; and, when they are gone, they are (like a dream, or a tale that is told) few and empty ; in so much, that those, who have lived thirty or forty years, must confess, they cannot remember, how they are past ; and that the remainder of their life is drawing to an end, while they eat, drink, and sleep. As therefore our life is so very short, we ought to live, as much as we can, in so short a space ; not measuring the length or shortness of our lives, by days, months, or years, or the whole time of our continuance in the body ; but by such actions, as distinguish a man from all other things, which God created ; and by exercising the understanding and will upon such objects, as answer the dignity and perfection of a reasonable creature : he consequently, who eats and

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drinks, and performs the other offices of a natural life, which are common to him with beasts, lives only like a beast; because a man's actions are to be governed, by reason, religion, and virtue.

He therefore, who most improves his knowledge and understanding; who best subdues his appetites and passions; who does most good, and makes himself most useful to the world; though he continue no longer, lives more and longer, than other men: being fully persuaded, that the life he enjoys here, is only in order to a better; he exerts more frequent and more perfect acts of a rational and christian life. 'Ye know not (says St. James) what shall be on the morrow: for, what is your life? it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' Such a man has lived a great while, how short soever the time be; who is old in virtue, and ripe for heaven and eternal bliss; who has laid up riches and glorious treasures for himself, in a future state; who has answered the ends of his life, by acts of piety and virtue, by improvements in knowledge and grace, and by the love of God and of his Son Christ Jesus our Lord.

The shortness of our lives is a sufficient answer to all objections against providence, taken from the prosperity of bad men, and the miseries and afflictions of the good; for they are both so short, that they are nothing compared to eternal pains and glory. As to the prosperity of wicked men, it can last but a little while: wherefore the inspired Psalmist says, 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.' As to the afflictions of the godly, the Apostle declareth, that his light affliction, which endureth but for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Besides, a long life is not reconcileable with the present state of the universe; because the world at present is very unequally divided: some have nothing, but what they can earn by hard labour, or extort from other men's charity, by continual importunity, or more ungodly means.

The advantages of Piety.

The disadvantage of long life.

means

means : wherefore, though the rich and prosperous (who have this world's goods, and live in ease and plenty, pleasure and abundance) would be well contented, to continue some hundreds of years in this life ; yet would any desire to suffer threescore years, more or less, in slavery, beggary, hunger, want, imprisonment, or such-like distresses ? And ought not then a great part of mankind, to be very thankful to God, for the shortness of life, which delivers them out of so much evil ? Our lives are long enough for the wise purposes of living : we come into this world, not barely to eat and drink, and to enjoy the delights of flesh and sense ; which are only meant to preserve life, and which God has sweetened with such proper satisfactions, or made the neglect of them so uneasy and painful, that no man might forget to take care to preserve himself : but we are born to conquer the wicked world, to triumph over it, to baffle its temptations, to despise its flatteries, and to endure its terrors and vexations : and if we live long enough, to perform this work ; we ought to resign our breath with content ; and to thank God, that he does so soon put an end to our labour, sorrow, and temptations.

V. By this it is plain, that we cannot live as we ought, without knowledge and virtue ; which, some may presume to say, are not to be so well attained in a short time, as in a long course of years. It is true, were the dark and intricate study of human learning, the knowledge necessary to improve a christian mind ; the age of Methuselah would not be enough, to attain all its depths and dark recesses ; but the knowledge, necessary for a christian, or to carry men to heaven, is imbibed with our first instructions in the christian faith : for (as we read in the holy gospel) ‘ This is life eternal ; ’ “ to know thee, “ the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast “ sent.” So that the knowledge, necessary to save our souls, is not a solution of the difficulties of nature and providence, nor concerning the secret things of God ; but it is confined, within the narrow bounds of divine revelation, or of faith in God through his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. But in regard to virtue, it may be urged, that the longer a man lives, the more good he

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our lives.*

will do, and make himself more useful to his fellow creatures : this may be granted ; yet it does not follow, that such a virtuous man ought to live longer upon earth, than the common age of human kind ; though he was born for this end, to do good unto all men : yet it was, for his own eternal welfare : when therefore he is by virtue fully prepared for heaven, it would be unjust to deprive him of the happy prize, after having run his race and conquered ; besides, this is God's care, who discharges him from doing any more good in this world, whenever he calls him to eternal rest. For the attainment of virtue, there is no need of long time ; it is proposed to us in the most plain and easy precepts, the most admirable examples, the most encouraging and inviting promises ; and with the most powerful assurances of the Divine Spirit, to aid, renew, and sanctify us : so that, whosoever is not reformed by these divine methods of grace in the compass of forty or fifty years, is not likely to be the better for them at the end of so many generations.

No time must be lost, in the pursuit of virtue. A divine soul, which aspires after immortality, should lose no time, to raise itself above the body, to conquer this present world by the belief and hope of things unseen, to awaken and exercise its spiritual powers and faculties ; and to adorn itself with those graces and virtues, which come down from the Father of lights, and which (by the mercies of God, and the merits of our Saviour) will carry us to heaven : especially, when he is threatened with endless misery, for the neglect of his salvation. How hard soever the libertine may think it, to be eternally damned for the short pleasures of sin ; no man can reasonably think it a hard condition of eternal salvation, to spend a short life in the service of God his Maker ; which service can no where be performed, but upon earth. If God may justly require our service and obedience for so great a reward, as a crown of eternal glory ; if nature, in its corrupt state, must be born again, and cleansed from all filth of sin ; if this body must be refined and spiritualized, before it can be glorified ; where must this work be perfected, if not upon earth ? Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

We have no information, from holy writ, of any middle state between living in this body and out of it : whatever dispositions and habits of the mind are necessary therefore, to make us happy when the soul departs from the body, must be formed, while we live in these bodies of flesh. *Of a middle state.* There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body ; yet that is not first, which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterwards that, which is spiritual : as therefore it is impossible, to pass immediately from the opposite natural state of the earth, to the spiritual state of heaven ; the middle state (in which we are spiritualized) between heaven and earth, is a life of holiness, during the time we inhabit these earthly tabernacles. A man, who has put off the lusts of the world, and fixed his mind on things above, belongs to both worlds ; his heart and affections are in heaven ; he meditates by faith, upon those invisible glories, and feels the relishes, the pleasures of an heavenly state, while he is yet united to this world by his body ; which is made of earth, and feels the natural impression of sensible objects. So whoever has his conversation in heaven, while he lives upon earth, is ready prepared and fitted to ascend with the Bridegroom, when death shall knock at the door ; passing from thence, as it were, through a middle region, or a state of a holy and divine life, into a perfect state of eternal happiness.

Since then death puts an end to our days, in which we are to serve God, and prepare for eternity ; and determines our future state for ever : *The danger and folly of a mis-spent life.* and, since this death comes but once, it is of infinite consequence ; that when death comes, we may be well prepared for his summons into eternity. Who would not take the utmost caution in doing, that, which can be done only once for his whole life ; especially, if the happiness of his whole life depends thereon ? No error can be corrected, in what is to be done but once : and shall that person hope for pardon, who permits death to surprize him ; who falls into the grave, without thought of futurity ; or (what is worse) who not only neglects, but (it may be) makes a jest of sin, and defies God and his judgments ? a wise man will use great caution in making an experiment ; which can never be

be tried a second time, and which if it fail, must absolutely cost him his life : this is the very case of all men, in regard of death : we can die but once ; and if we miscarry that once, we are undone for ever : yet this is the dangerous experiment, made every day by sinners ; who stake their souls at random, endeavour to stifle the checks of conscience ; put off their repentance, in hopes, that death is still far off, that sickness and God's holy Spirit will call them in time to repent ; and at the best, venture the infinite hazard of a death-bed repentance. Oh ! let no one be deceived ! That man will be miserable, who is so weak, as to think, that a few distracted, confused, and almost despairing sighs and groans can obtain pardon and forgiveness for a mis-spent life. Alas ! if such bold adventurers, as these, could return back into the world, and live their lives over again after they have discovered their mistake and folly, the hazard would not be so great : but this is impossible. Whoever walks in the paths of unrighteousness, until he be hardened in sin ; and having grieved the Spirit, is forsaken of the grace of God ; whoever is cut off by death or surprize, without warning, while he continues in sin, must be lost for ever ; because he dies, without that repentance to salvation, never to be repented of. Is not that man then most foolish, who takes no care, before death comes, to make his calling and election sure ?

Remember then, that thou must die ; and that will furnish thee with perpetual remedy, against the follies and vanities of this wicked world, and promote the growth of christian piety. *How we ought to live in this world.* Whenever a man finds, that his desires after this world exceed their limitations in the gospel ; let him remember the fool in the gospel, whose soul was required of him the same night, that he enlarged his desires beyond the wants and conveniencies of life : let him remember, that he can have no continuing abode here ; and that death will shortly close his eyes, and the grave will presently swallow him up : and then all his thoughts perish, and his riches cannot follow him. In this decay of nature, it would deserve our consideration, that neither fortune nor honours, in the day of the Lord, will avail us any farther, than the good use we have made of them

them in this world ; and unless the rich and honourable be more virtuous than he, they are not better than the poorest man, who begs an alms in the name of the Lord : for, with God, there is no respect of persons ; because, not the riches of the body, but the beauties and glories of the spirit, are pleasing in the sight of God ; for godliness only is great gain. If there can be no trust nor hope then in riches or honours ; what folly is it for a man, to be intoxicated with the love of sensual pleasures, which must all perish with the body ? The soul, which desires to live for ever, must not be weakened with ease, and softness, and luxury, which are the plain paths to hell ; but must be accustomed, to seek after eternal pleasures, which accompany her beyond the grave ; and, being stript of flesh and blood, enable her to live for ever. Men however, who must make a necessary provision for the body in this life, perhaps cannot always live here, as if the next moment were to end their lives : for who then would be saved ? But our lives should always be, as innocent ; as free from malice, injustice, and oppression ; as if we were immediately to appear, before the judgment-seat of Christ : we may (and should) always live, as those, who must certainly die ; and guard all our actions with the thought, that *they* must *all* be one day accounted for.

VI. The common and very proper name of Death is the *king of terrors* ; because it is the most terrible thing to mankind. The natural principle of self preservation, and the love of life, *Death, why so dreadful to human nature.* create in all men a natural aversion from death : for (as the Preacher observes) ‘ As light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun ; so, as all men love life, its necessary consequence is to fear death ;’ which aversion from death God has imprinted in man, to oblige us to take care of ourselves, and to avoid whatever will destroy or shorten our lives : and this, in many particulars, is a great principle of virtue, so far as it preserves us from all fatal and destructive vices.

When this natural fear of death is not increased by extraordinary causes, it may be conquered by the force of sound reason. Thus, many examples teach, that the

How the
 fear of
 Death may
 be removed.

miseries and calamities of this life very often reconcile men to death, and make them earnestly desire it; as in the case of Job, who in the midst of his afflictions said, 'My soul chuseth strangling and death, rather than life: I loath it; I would not live alway.' If (then) the sense of present suffering can conquer the fears of death, there is no doubt but the hope of immortal life may do the same, in a more eminent degree: for, were men thoroughly convinced, that by death they are to be translated to a more happy state; it would be as easy a thing, to put off these bodies, as to change their cloaths; or to remove, from an old ruinous house, to a more convenient and beautiful dwelling place. This is the very case, of a dying christian: his fear of death (arising naturally, either from the thoughts of ceasing to be, or from an unwillingness to change this life for one he knows nothing of) is taken away by the gospel revelation; which discovers to us a new and glorious world, where we may live for ever, if we improve our time here. A christian, whose life is conformable to the doctrine and example of his Saviour, sees nothing frightful or terrible in death; though, through the infirmity of the flesh, his body naturally startle at it, and draw back from it, as he meets with it in the way to immortal life: we cannot expect, wholly to conquer our natural aversion from death, but we cannot always have hope of a blessed immortality; and (with St. Paul) can desire, 'not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon; that mortality may be swallowed up of life.' The only way to arm ourselves against these natural fears of dying, is then to confirm ourselves in this Belief; 'that death does not put an end to us; that our souls shall survive, in a state of bliss and happiness, though our bodies shall turn to dust; and that these mortal bodies shall themselves rise again immortal and glorious, at the sound of the last trump: "for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."' The man who believes and expects this, can have no reason to be afraid of death; but, on the contrary, has great reason, not to fear death; though he tremble a little, under the weakness and aversions of nature, in its degenerate state.

As Sin is the cause of death, so also is it that alone, which makes death itself most terrible. It is not barely the separation of soul and body, which is the terror of death to a christian; but, that the separation is inflicted by God, and accompanied with his wrath. It is sin only which gives death that horror: the sting of death is Sin; which makes it really insupportable, even to the most distant thought. When the death of the body is the forerunner of that death of the soul, from which there is no hope of release, but the wrath of God must abide on it for ever; then it is, that death appears truly dreadful and terrible. This is that, which makes wicked men (conscious of their own guilt, and sensible of the wrath of God hanging over their heads) so amazed at the approach, and even at the thoughts of death: they cannot bear, to think on so affrighting a prospect; but are even overwhelmed, and swallowed up, with astonishment and despair. To consider, that the face of the Lord is against them that do evil; and (consequently) that he is of the number of those, whom God hates and despises; must strike the sinner through, with horror and amazement; and must make him tremble, even in the midst of his greatest mirth and jollity. The libertine may flatter himself, as he pleases; and may think to deceive others, by putting on an air of gaiety and pleasantness: but, it is certain, his mind can never be long at rest, while he carries about him a faithful monitor; who will be continually upbraiding him, for his folly and madness; representing before his eyes, the dangers he is exposed to; and crossing him (as it were) in his way, while he is in full pursuit of his unlawful pleasures. Vice has its present pleasures, as well as virtue; but with this difference: the pleasures of sin are weak, short-lived, and only varnished over; they begin and end, almost in the same moment; and can never be purchased, but at the expence of a deal of succeeding trouble, shame, and self-condemnation.

The unwillingness of men, to leave this world, is occasioned by that great fondness and passion, which the generality of mankind retain for this present life: whatever glorious things they hear of a future state,

*Sin makes
our Death
most ter-
rible.*

*Whence a-
risseth the
desire of
long life.*

being

being of the earth, earthly, like only what they see : and, not expecting to better their condition, chuse to stay in this life ; it is a double death to these, to be snatched away from their darling pleasures. In such a case, nothing would be more effectual to moderate our desire for things of this nature, now we are alive and well ; than seriously to reflect, in what light they will appear to us, just at the article of death : none can be more miserable, than the men of the world, who seldom think of any thing beyond it, when they are not to continue any longer in it.

It would be in vain to set about to persuade such men, that the next world is a happier place than this : *Its cure.* the best way will be, to endeavour their conversion, by setting before them the terrors of a future state ; where the devil, his angels, and the unhappy souls of unrepenting sinners, departed this life, are confined to all eternity, in lakes of fire and brimstone. Ask that mere worldling, ‘ what shall it profit him, to gain the whole world and lose his own soul ; or what can he give, in exchange for his soul ?’ In a word, drive such men on, to dread and fear the consequences of a mis-spent life, until the fear of death cure their vicious passions and thirst after this world ; and then the fear of death will by degrees cure itself of that irksomeness, so common in human nature. Consequently they, who intend in good earnest to set about the cure of this fear of death, should mortify all remains of love and affection for this world, and withdraw themselves as much as possible from the conversation thereof ; using it sparingly and with indifference, rather to supply the wants, than to enjoy the pleasures of nature : and then they will find no more difficulty, in leaving this world for heaven ; than a traveller does, when he leaves a foreign country, to return to his native land.

VII. Whoever can thus meet death, is arrived to the height and perfection of christian virtue : for *The height of christian perfection.* this is the true mortification of the flesh, with its affections and lusts : this is the way, to die to this world, and to live unto God ; and, when we are dead to this world, the fear of dying and leaving it will cease : for, what should a man do in this world, who is dead to it and all things therein ? So when

when we are alive to God, nothing can be so desireable, as to go to him : here we live only to God by faith and hope ; whereas the place, where God dwelleth, is the proper place for this divine life.

How happy is the state of good men, at the hour of death ! The consciousness, of having in some measure lived holily and unblameably, will *The Death of the Righteous.* make a man look up with a chearful assurance to the great Supporter of his being ; and will enable him, to see through the darkest clouds of sorrow and affliction, and to behold with an eye of faith that heavenly country, whither he is travelling, and where he hopes shortly to arrive. In the hour of death, a good man considers the pains of his dissolution to be nothing else, but the breaking down of that partition, which stands betwixt his soul and the sight of that Being ; who is always present with him, and is about to manifest itself to him in fulness of joy : he looks into eternity, without terror ; where, instead of a court of justice, he is to approach a throne of grace : instead of a judge, rigorous to mark what is done amiss, he will meet with an Advocate and a Saviour, who died for us, and has redeemed us at the price of his own blood : such a soul as this casteth away fear, possesseth a perfect calm and serenity ; and, transported with joy and triumph, magnifies the Lord, and rejoices in God his Saviour, who is ready to pronounce it blessed, and to crown it with glory. This is the death of the righteous ; and God grant, that our latter end may be like unto his ! that, in the agonies of death, and in the very jaws of the grave, we may not be discomposed with disturbing thoughts, nor distracted with guilty fear ! but, that we may depart this life, with all the joyful tokens of eternal rest ! Therefore (as saith the Apostle to the Corinthians) ‘ My beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord ; forasmuch, as ye know, that your labour is not in vain in the Lord ! ’ What a glorious incitement is this, to all men, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world ! ‘ that no good action shall be lost, or fall to the ground ; but that, in a little time, all our services will be infinitely rewarded : that every grace and virtue, which we exercise in this life, and every degree of

' of them, shall receive their just recompence at the re-
 ' surrection of the just; and that, if we believe in God,
 ' and serve him faithfully and sincerely in this life, we
 ' may be assured, we shall (through the tender mercies
 ' of our heavenly Father, and the merits of our Redeem-
 ' er) be received into a place of everlasting rest and peace;
 ' where we shall adore and praise the author of our sal-
 ' vation, and contemplate the glorious perfections of his
 ' majesty, with a joy and satisfaction infinitely exceeding
 ' all we now can possible conceive, when mortality shall
 ' be swallowed up of life, and death and sorrow shall be
 ' no more; when we shall be eased of all our pains, re-
 ' solved of all our doubts, purged from all our sins, freed
 ' from all our fears, and be happy beyond our hopes;
 ' and have all this happiness secured to us, beyond the
 ' power of time and change!

I shall therefore conclude, with my earnest request for
 the good of your soul; that you immediately
The danger enter upon the practice, of what you have
of putting read in this book; of what you are herein
off our turn- taught to be your duty, and the duty of eve-
ing to God. ry christian. Delays are dangerous; and
 especially, in a matter of so great importance, as the care
 of our Souls: one moment of time may deprive us, by un-
 foreseen accidents, of those means of grace, which God
 has now put into our hands. *Make therefore no long tar-*
rying, to turn to the Lord; and put not off from day to day.
 Ecclesiasticus v. 7.

The End of the THIRD PART.

PRIVATE
DEVOTIONS:

CONTAINING

Directions and Prayers

FOR

MORNING and EVENING;

WITH

Occasional PRAYERS, suited to various
Circumstances of Life:

To which are added,

Prayers proper for *Sick Persons*;

AND

For such, as receive the Holy Sacrament of
the *Lord's Supper*; with HEADS of *Self-
Examination* before receiving the same:

ALSO

INSTRUCTIONS, for the more profitable Read-
ing of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The SIXTEENTH EDITION.

*The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him; yea, all
such, as call upon him faithfully — He also will hear
their cry, and will help them.* Ps. cxlv. 18, 19.

D U B L I N:

M, DCC, LXIV.

To the READER.

HAVING shewn (in *Sunday 7*, of the *NEW Whole Duty of Man*) that *Prayer* is every Man's Duty; that the Practice of it is Advantageous and Necessary; and that the Objections, usually brought against it, are very unreasonable and fallacious; I rather chuse to refer you, to what I have there said, than to trouble you with any farther Preface to these Devotions.

✍ *Note*: When the Prayers for Morning or Evening are to be used with a *Family*.

Instead of	{	<i>I</i>	}	say	{	<i>we</i>
		<i>me</i>				<i>us</i>
		<i>my</i>				<i>our</i>
		<i>I was</i>				<i>we were</i>
		<i>I am</i>				<i>we are</i>
		<i>myself</i>				<i>ourselves</i>

They, whose Time will not permit them to use all the Prayers, &c. directed to be said every Morning and Evening, may content themselves with the use of the Prayer for Morning on page 450, and the Prayer for Evening on page 459.

DEVOTIONS

For the USE of

FAMILIES and Particular Persons.

Directions and Prayers for Morning.

Directions.

THE best preparation for spending the day well, is, to resolve when you first awake in the morning, and to strive as earnestly as you can, to keep all worldly thoughts out of your mind, until you have presented the first fruits of the day to God; lifting up, with your first breath, your souls to the Creator and Preserver of all things, in such-like pious sentences as these.

AWAKE, O my soul, and sing praises to thy God!
I laid me down and slept, and rose up again; for the Lord sustained me.

Lord, raise me up at the last day, that I may enter into the joy of thee, my Lord!

Awake, O my soul, to righteousness, and sin not; that we may be glorified together, when I shall be awakened by the last trumpet, to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

Glory be to thee, O Lord, for watching over me the night past!

Directions.

While your body is busied in dressing itself, adorn your mind with spiritual and religious meditations. Let the miscarriages of others, and your own daily experience, teach you, to guard against those temptations, into which business or company too frequently lead us: and resolve to embrace, and contrive to the utmost how to improve, every occasion which shall offer itself, for the service of God, the good of your neighbour, and the salvation of your own soul, in the course of the day.

Then

450 *Directions and Prayers for Morning.*

Then, being dressed according to your ability and present calling, kneel down before God; and seal your good resolutions, with the following preparatory prayer.

A Preparatory Prayer, for God's Grace and Assistance.

ASSIST *me* mercifully, O Lord, in all *my* supplications and prayers; and dispose the way of *me* thy servant, towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, *I* may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ, *my* Lord. *Amen.*

The Morning Prayer, for Every Day.

MOST gracious Lord God, the spring of all our comforts here, and the sure and certain foundation of all our hopes hereafter; in whom *I* live, move, and have *my* being! look down from heaven upon *me*, who humbly beg leave to renew *my* thanks to thy Divine Majesty. *I* confess, that under thy protection *I* have this night slept secure; and praised be thy holy name, that *I* am now in health and safety: therefore, as long as *I* live, *I* will magnify thee, for *my* creation, *my* preservation, and all the blessings and comforts *I* enjoy. O most merciful Father, forgive *me* all the unworthy returns *I* have made, for the manifold favours *I* have received from thee: grant *me*, for the time to come, such a sense of thine infinite goodness and mercy; that *I* may love thee, with all *my* heart, with all *my* soul, and with all *my* strength; that *I* may study to please thee in all things, and be afraid of nothing so much, as thy wrath and indignation: and, that *I* may serve thee as *I* ought, preserve *me* from all the power of ensnaring objects, and make *me* truly sensible of the vanity of this world; neither permit *me* to be brought under the dominion of those lusts, which war against the soul. Grant *me* a right understanding of thy will and grace, so to use this world, as not to abuse it; so that neither the cares of this life, nor the deceitfulness of riches, may ever make *me* neglect the great work of *my* salvation. Create in *me* O God, a clean heart, and root out thereof all covetous affections and desires; and let it be *my* great care and concern, to lay up a treasure in heaven, and provide for eternity: so that, being delivered
from

from pride and vain-glory, from a fond conceit of *myself*, or a mean opinion of others, from a censorious and uncharitable spirit, from an envious and malicious temper, and from all sinful and corrupt affections, so hateful in thy sight; *I* may be endued with that wisdom from above, which is first pure and then peaceable; with that meekness and humility, which is of so great price in thy sight; and with all those holy and christian dispositions, which thou lovest, and which thou delightest to find in the sons of men. Oh! grant *me* always a true sense of *my* own frailty, of the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and of the eternity of that which is to come; that *I* may always be careful so to live, as *I* shall wish *I* had done when *I* come to die. Let neither sickness nor death ever surprise *me*, nor find *me* in a state unprovided: but grant, that *I* may finish the great work of *my* salvation before the night comes, when no man can work; that so, having laid up a good foundation of hope and comfort against the day of trouble and sickness, *I* may (whenever thou shalt be pleased to call *me* hence) chearfully resign *my* soul into thy hands. This *I* most humbly pray, through the merits, and for the sake, of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, *my* Saviour!

Assist <i>me</i> , O Lord, this day, in all <i>my</i> honest labours and endeavours; and grant, that <i>I</i> may take nothing in hand, but what is agreeable to thee, <i>my</i> God. To Thee, <i>I</i> also humbly beg leave, to commend <i>my</i> soul and body, and all who stand in any relation to <i>me</i> ; beseeching thee, of thy great goodness to take us under thy protection, and defend	On Sunday Morning, instead of the opposite Paragraph, say; <i>I</i> blest thee also, for the appointment of one day in seven, for our rest, and thy more peculiar worship; dispose <i>my</i> heart, O Lord, <i>I</i> humbly beseech thee, to a serious attendance upon thee in all holy duties. Make <i>me</i> duly mindful, of all thy sacred institutions; and grant, that <i>I</i> may never so far forget the interest of <i>my</i> soul, as to neglect the religious observance of the christian sabbath. Grant, that <i>I</i> may observe it according to thy commandment, as a means of promoting a holy and virtuous life; and of preparing <i>my</i> soul, for the enjoyments of the most glorious and delightful praises; which are the happiness and employment of angels, and of us
--	---

us from all evil, the souls of just men made perfect. and lead us in the way we should go, Should *I* offend thee, by *my* negligent performance of those holy duties, which *I* ought to perform on this *thy* holy day; so that, whilst we *I* be not provoked, to withdraw the assistance of thy Holy Spirit from *me*, and are engaged about things temporal, to leave *me* to the folly and vanity of *my* own will: but forgive *me* all *my* past offences, and mercifully hear *my* prayer: we may not forget the things which are eternal, nor be unmindful of that great account; and let *my* cry come unto thee, in the day of *my* necessity. Withdraw *my* mind which we must from the care, the business, and the give, when thou great pleasures of this life; that *I* may shalt call us to more freely attend, upon the great judgment at the concerns of a far better life; and that *my* last day. Oh! leave prayers and praises, and all *my* services, us not to ourselves; may be offered up in such a serious and but guard us from devout manner, as may render them acceptable in thy sight. Make *me* attentive those snares and to thy holy word, and to all the temptations which good instructions, which shall this day every where surround us in this be given *me*: and grant, that *I* may not body of corruption rest in any outward performances; but, Guide us by thy by a right use of thy holy ordinances, good Spirit thro' may grow in grace, and every day become the affairs and business of this life; in all virtuous and godly living; that, that we may at last when this short life shall have an end, arrive at that place *I* may dwell with thee in life everlasting. Preserve the universal church, and of everlasting rest and peace, which bless every christian assembly with thy thou hast prepared gracious presence: hear the prayers for those, who truly and sincerely they shall this day put up, and make the love and fear thee: word effectual to the pulling down the through the merits kingdom of Satan, and to the building and intercession of up of the church of Christ in sound the same thy beloved Son, Jesus faith and real virtue; that so thy word, Christ, our Lord; coming with power into every conscience, may have a due and saving effect in whose most comfortable upon the minds of all, who hear and read the same. Give a plentiful portion prehensive words of thy good Spirit unto all; who by

I offer

I offer up my imperfect prayers; saying, as he hath taught me:

Our Father, &c.

sickness, imprisonment, or any other impediment, are detained from partaking of the means of grace I enjoy; and mercifully relieve and help them in their straits and afflictions: and, O most gracious Father, pardon my sins and imperfections, and relieve all my necessities; for the sake of Jesus Christ, who has taught me thus to pray,

Our Father, &c.

Directions.

Here, if your time will permit, add the prayers of general Intercession and Thanksgiving, as you find them in the pages following, before you use the concluding Prayer.

The concluding Prayer.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

The Intercession.

MOST gracious God, whose mercy is over all thy Works; I beseech thee, to extend thy pity and compassion to the whole race of mankind: let the bright beams of thy gospel shine, in all the corners of the earth; that those, who sit in darkness, may come to the knowledge and practice of thy laws; and their souls be saved in the great day, when thy Son Christ Jesus shall come to judge the earth: and I most humbly pray, that thou wilt pardon the great and crying sins of this nation; and turn from us the evils, which we have most justly deserved: stop all prophaneness, irreligion, and impiety, and compose all our unhappy animosities in church and state; so that truth and justice, brotherly love and charity, may ever flourish and abound. Defend thy holy catholic church, and that part especially of the communion of saints, which thou hast planted in these kingdoms; heal the breaches and divisions thereof; and, for the sake of us all, preserve thy servant *GEORGE*, our king: protect his person, direct his counsels, prosper his govern-

454 *Directions and Prayers for Morning.*

government, and make him an instrument, in thy hand, of great good to these kingdoms and all his subjects. Direct the pastors and governors of thy church, with a spirit of true religion and goodness; and make them zealous and diligent, to promote it in all those, whom thou hast committed to their care. Adorn the nobility, magistrates, gentry, and commons of these realms, with wisdom, grace, and good understanding; that they may all study to serve thee, and to discharge the duties of their several stations; always remembering the great account, which they must one day give at the judgment-seat of Christ. Relieve all, who are in any affliction or distress, and labour under poverty or persecution, under bodily pains or diseases, or under temptation or trouble of mind; and, in thy good time, deliver them out of all their trouble and distress. Bless with the choicest of thy graces, all *my* friends and relations; [* particularly *my* father and mother, *my* brothers and sisters, *my* dear wife and children:] pardon all our sins, unite our hearts in a mutual love of each other; and vouchsafe, to every one of us (and to all others, who either pray for *me* or desire *my* prayers) whatever thy infinite wisdom knows to be most expedient for us. Requite all those, who have been any ways instrumental to *my* good, according to their works; and forgive those, who have done or wished *me* evil, and grant them repentance and better inclinations! All which I humbly beseech thee to grant, for the sake and through the merits of thy dearly beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

The Thanksgiving.

ALmighty God, Father of all mercies, I offer up unto thy divine majesty *my* unfeigned praises, in return for all those numberless mercies and benefits, which thou hast vouchsafed unto *me*. I more particularly bless thy holy name, for the mercies I have received; for *my* deliverance from sin, and the temptations, which have been conquered by *me*; and for all the good I have done: for preserving *me*, in health and safety; for the plentiful provision, which I enjoy by thy goodness; and for

* *If you have any such near relations.*

for the continuing to *me*, the enjoyment of so many comforts: as also for delivering *me* from the evils, which *I* have most justly deserved; and to which *I am* continually exposed, by the weakness of *my* nature, and the power of the enemy. But, above all, *I* laud and magnify thy glorious name, for the incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of *my* Saviour, thy Son, Jesus Christ; who is the foundation of all thy mercies, and the author and finisher of *my* faith; in whose name alone *I* have a right to pray to thee, and to sum up all *my* prayers and praises, saying;

Our Father, &c.

Directions.

Then, rising from your knees (if your time and business will permit) improve your soul, by reading some portion of holy scripture, more especially of the New Testament. But first beseech your heavenly Father, to assist you with his Holy Spirit; that you may so understand and practise his word, that it shall make you wise unto salvation, in some such form, as here followeth.

A Prayer, for the right Use of the Holy Scriptures.

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning; grant, that *I* may in such wise hear them; read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that, by patience, and comfort of thy holy word, *I* may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given *me* in *my* Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Directions.

In reading the great mysteries of faith, prostrate your reason to revelation; and lift up your heart continually to God, in some short sentence agreeable to the subject you are reading, after the manner following; and, reading a little at a time, digest it well for thy comfort and practice: and, if time permit, read some part of this New Whole Duty of Man; for, variety is found, not only to please, but to be the best way to instruct human nature.

Ejacu-

456 *Directions and Prayers for Evening.*

Ejaculations,

To be used, while you are reading the Scripture.

LORD, give me grace to obey this command !
Or,

Lord, deliver me from this temptation, this sin, or this judgment !

Or,

Glory be to thee, O Lord, for this mercy !

Or,

Lord grant me thy grace, to make my calling and election sure !

Directions and Prayers, for Evening.

AT night spare some time, before thou goest to bed, for thy devotions ; and laying aside all business and company, retire to thy closet, and begin with

The Preparatory Prayer.

O God, send into my soul thy Holy Spirit, to help my infirmities ; and so dispose my mind, and prepare my heart, that my prayers and praises may be acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

Directions.

To this add the prayer in page 455, for a right use of the holy scriptures ; and then read some portion of holy scripture, and of this New Whole Duty of Man, as directed just above : and, having composed thy thoughts, pray to God, to enlighten thy memory in the examination of thy past life, saying ;

A Prayer, for Sincerity in the Examination and Acknowledgment of our Sins to God.

O Eternal God, who searchest the hearts and triest the reins of man, and knowest his thoughts long before ; dispose me frequently, to examine the state of my mind, and to compare my actions with the rule of thy laws. Raise in me an abhorrence, of whatsoever offends thee ; that I may always turn my feet unto thy testimonies : and let neither self-love, sloth, negligence, nor any other

other darling passion, so impose upon or divert *me*, from searching into the corruptions of *my* own heart; as to escape *my* repentance: but vouchsafe *me* the assistance of thy holy Spirit, that *I* may so impartially judge and condemn *myself*, that *I* may not be condemned at thy fearful judgment seat; and that, in a full discovery of *my* own vileness, *I* may humble *myself* under the rod of thy divine justice; and, from *my* heart condemning all those follies, whereby *I* have provoked thy wrath and indignation against *me*, *I* may earnestly solicit thy pardon and forgiveness; through the merits of thy Son, Jesus Christ, *my* Lord. *Amen.*

Directions.

Then examine your conscience by this short method.

A short Form of Examination of Conscience.

WHAT sin have *I* this day committed, in thought, word, or deed?

What opportunity of doing good, have *I* neglected?

Have *I* omitted, or carelessly performed, *my* religious duties?

Have *I* done any injustice to *my* neighbour, in his body, family, goods, or reputation?

Am *I* willing, to make him restitution, as *I* am able?

Am *I* ready, as God has forgiven *me* in Christ Jesus, to forgive such as have offended *me*?

Directions.

To the above may be added such other Questions, as your particular circumstances may require; which you will find more particularly set forth, in the general heads of examination, which follow hereafter in these devotions, before the prayers for the sacrament: and then confess your own guiltiness to Almighty God, in this or some such form, as follows:

A Form of Confession.

ALmighty and most merciful Father, *I* have erred and strayed from thy ways like a lost sheep. *I* have followed too much the devices and desires of *my* own heart. *I* have offended, against thy holy laws. *I* have
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458 *Directions and Prayers for Evening.*

left undone those things, which I ought to have done; and I have done those things, which I ought not to have done; and there is no health in *me*: but thou, O Lord, have mercy upon *me*, a miserable offender. Spare *me*, O God, who confess *my* faults: cleanse *me*, from all *my* secret and unknown transgressions: and be reconciled unto *me*, who *am* heartily sorry for *my* sins, and grieved that I have offended thee. Reserve not *my* sins, to be punished in the day of thy fierce anger: but spare *me*; and grant, that I may never fall into those evils, which *my* sins have justly deserved of thy justice. Restore *me*, that *am* penitent; according to thy promises, declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesu, our Lord. As there is nothing I so much desire, as to be of the number of thine elect; for thy favour is better than life itself, and the most perfect freedom is not to be compared to thy service: grant *me* strength, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to forsake all *my* sins; and to reform, whatever has been amiss in the temper and disposition of *my* mind, or in any of the actions of *my* life: that, when I depart hence, I may be received into that blessed state, where sin and death shall have no dominion over *me*! All which I beg, for the sake and in the name of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Directions.

After which acknowledgment of your own corruption and unworthiness, renew your resolutions of amendment, and beg for mercy through Christ: and this, not slightly, nor only as of course; but, with as devout an earnestness, as if you were sure, that death were as near approaching, as your sleep; as, for aught you know, it may indeed: you should no more venture, therefore, to go to bed, and to sleep unrecommended to God; than you would dare to die, in that miserable state.

Then offer up unto God the tribute of your evening sacrifice, of prayer and thanksgiving as well for his usual and daily preservations, as for his extraordinary deliverances: and above all, endeavour by the consideration of his mercies, to have your heart the more closely knit to him; remembering, that every favour received from God is a new engagement upon you, to love and obey him still more and more.

The

The Evening Prayer for Every Day.

O Most glorious Lord God ; although I know, thou hatest iniquity with a perfect hatred ; yet I am assured also, that thou delightest in the ways of mercy ; that thou art a tender lover of souls ; and not only permittest, but invitest us, miserable creatures, to come unto the throne of thy grace, to be protected under the shadow of thy wings. Therefore, O Lord, with humble confidence I lift up my soul unto thee ; beseeching thee, not to cast me away from thy presence ; but, for the sake of my dear Redeemer, receive me graciously to thy mercy ; and let the merit of his bitter death and passion atone, for all my follies and miscarriages. Pardon, I meekly beseech thee, whatever I have done amiss this day, and all my life past, either against Thee, my neighbour, or myself. Convince me truly, O Lord, of the great folly and danger of sin, and make me so afraid of offending thee ; that I may abstain from all appearance of evil, and do nothing, but what is pleasing in thy sight. Let the interest of my immortal soul be my chief care and concern ; and grant, that I may live, as becomes the Gospel of Christ, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world. But forasmuch, as without thee I am not able to please thee ; grant me the assistance of thy grace and Holy Spirit, that I may pass through all the temptations of this world with peace, and innocence, and safety : enable me to bear up, with courage and resolution, against all the assaults of my great adversary the devil, who is daily lying in wait to destroy me. Cleanse me, from all my secret and unknown transgressions : and grant, that I may seriously consider and reflect upon the foulness and deformity of sin, and what dreadful threatnings thou hast denounced against it ; that I may become a true and sincere mourner for my past sins ; and, as far as is possible, redeem my mis-spent time, by employing the remainder of my days to thy service, and to thy glory for ever. Teach me so to number my days, that I may become wise unto salvation ; and give me that hatred and abhorrence of sin and iniquity, that I may abstain from every kind and sort of evil, which is abominable in thy sight, and hurtful to my

460 *Directions and Prayers for Evening.*

soul. Breathe into *me*, O Lord, a new heart, new affections, and new desires; and *I* may love thee with more sincerity, and serve thee with greater faithfulness, than *I* have ever done before. Open *my* eyes, to behold the vanity and uncertainty of all things here below: grant, that *I* may make thee *my* only joy and *my* delight, *my* stay and *my* trust, *my* guide and *my* counsellor: that, in the days of health and prosperity, *I* may consider *my* latter end, and remember and provide for that great account, which *I* must one day give before the judgment-seat of Christ: that, when the hour of *my* departure shall come, *I* may meet death without fear or amazement; and, with a well-grounded hope of thy mercy and goodness, may cheerfully resign *my* soul into thy hands; when thou, *my* God, in thy great wisdom, shall see it fitting to call *me* to thyself. Extend thy mercy, O God, to all mankind: have pity upon all *Jews*, *Turks*, *Infidels*, and *Hereticks*; and bring them, to the light, and knowledge, and practice of thy laws. Bless thy holy Catholic Church; and especially that part of it, which thou hast planted in these Kingdoms; remove out of it all errors and corruptions, all divisions and dissensions; and grant, that the lives of christians may be holy and exemplary, and such, as become the gospel of our blessed Saviour. Reform all things amiss in these kingdoms: root out, from among us, all irreligion and profaneness, all uncharitableness and animosities; pardon our great and crying sins; avert the evils we have deserved; continue the light of thy glorious gospel among us; and give us all grace, to turn from the evil of our ways, unto thee, the Lord our God; that thou mayest delight over us, to do us good; to build us up, and not to destroy us. Bless our sovereign Lord the King, and all that are in authority under him, both in church and state; make them all in their several places and stations, useful and serviceable, to thy glory, and to the good and welfare of this church and nation. O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, look down with pity and compassion upon all thy afflicted servants every where: give them courage and patience, comfort and support in thee, and (in thy good time) a joyful deliverance out of all their troubles: and *I* most humbly beseech thee, O Lord (who art thoroughly acquainted with all our wants,

wants, and knowest what is best and most fitting both for our souls and bodies) to be gracious to all *my* friends and relations, [and more particularly to *my father, mother, brother, sister, friends, &c.* *] Do good unto those, who have at any time done or wished us evil; and vouchsafe unto every one of us, and to all christians, whatever thou knowest to be best for our temporal and eternal welfare: and, in the deepest sense of gratitude to thee *my* Lord and Maker, I pray thou wilt accept my unfeigned praises, for all thy blessings; for *my* health and safety, and all the comforts of *my* life; for the redemption of mankind, and the means and hopes of glory, which proceed from thy bounty and goodness.

* To thee therefore, I *On Sunday Evening, before the*
ascribe all possible praise *paragraph mark'd * in the op-*
and thanksgiving; hum- *posite column, say,*
bly beseeching thee, to Cause thy word, which I
grant *me* the continuance have heard or read, to abide in
of thy mercy and good- *my* heart, and to bring forth the
ness; and to take *me* and fruits of a holy and religious
them, and all that belong life: and, if I have come with-
to *me*, this night, under out due preparation to thy holy
thy care and protection; worship, or have been heedless
preserving us from all pe- and unattentive in hearing thy
rils and dangers, and giv- holy word; I now present *my-*
ing us such refreshing rest *self* (this evening of *thy holy day*)
and sleep, as may fit us before thee, acknowledging that
for the duties of the day and all *my* manifold sins, by
following: and, if, thou which I have deserved thy just
be pleased to add another displeasure and indignation; and
day to our lives; grant, I humbly pray thee, for Jesus
that we may make a right Christ's sake, to forgive all that
use and improvement is past, to guide *me* in the ways
thereof, to thy glory, and of thy truth and holiness; and
the benefit of our immor- to help *me* to set thee always be-
tal souls, through Jesus fore *mine* eyes, that I may al-
Christ, our Lord; . in ways fear and dread to offend
whose name and words I thee, *my* God!
farther pray, saying; Our [Then conclude with the paragraph
Father, which art, &c. mark'd * in the opposite column.]

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* If you have any.

Directions.

Here, if time permit, add the prayers of Intercession and Thanksgiving on pages 453 and 454, before you use the concluding Prayer.

The concluding Prayer.

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with *me* for evermore. *Amen.*

Ejaculations or short Sentences, to be said in bed.

I Will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is thou, O Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety. Into thy hands I commend my spirit; sweet Jesus, receive my soul! For thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth!

Occasional PRAYERS.

A Morning Prayer, to be used by a young Person.

ALMIGHTY God, who art the kind Author of my being; so inspire me with that wisdom, which is from above; that I may constantly walk, in the ways of thy laws, and in the work of thy commandments; that I may be preserved, from all temptations, and the ways of the destroyer. Accept of my unfeigned thanks, for all the blessings I daily receive from thy providence, and for my last night's particular preservation and refreshment. Have mercy upon me, and forgive me all **my** sins; and give me grace, to flee all youthful foolish passions and sinful desires; and that I may always walk, as in thy presence, ever mindful of my latter end. Bend my heart, with that awful tenderness for my parents, and for all those who have the care of me, and with that christian sense of my duty towards them; that my language may be respectful, my actions dutiful, and my whole behaviour such, that I may prove a comfort and blessing to them, who take so much care of me. Help me, ever to remember the christian principles, which I have learned;
and

and the pious instructions, which have been given me; and never to depart from the good way, in which I have been taught to walk. Incline my heart to all that is good: grant, that I may be, modest and humble, in my carriage and behaviour; chaste and pure, in all my thoughts, words, and actions: true and just, in all my dealings; respectful and obedient, to my superiors; innocent and inoffensive, in my whole conversation; faithful and diligent, in the discharge of all the duties of that state and condition of life, wherein thou hast placed me: and teach me, to fear thee and love thee, my God, above all things; and to do to all others, as I would they should do unto me. Make me perfectly contented, with my condition; and thankful to thee, who hast given me all things necessary for life and godliness. Let thy good providence always take care of me; and let me never place my trust and confidence in any thing, but in thee: and deliver me, from sloth, idleness, and bad company; and from all dangers, both of body and soul; that I may encrease daily, in the knowledge and love of thee, my God; and of thy Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord. Accept of my humble petition for [* *my father, mother, brethren, sisters, &c.*] all my friends and relations, all this family, and the whole race of mankind; and grant unto us all those graces and blessings, which thou knowest to be most needful for the attainment of everlasting life; and now, my God and my Lord, I freely offer unto thee my soul and my body; beseeching thee, to take them into thy care and protection; that they may be always employed, in thy service, and to thy glory; and, having faithfully served thee in this life, that I may at last obtain life everlasting, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, who has taught his disciples thus to pray, saying,

Our Father, &c.

An Evening Prayer, to be used by a young Person.

MOST mighty Lord and everlasting God, I most humbly beseech thee, to pardon me, in whatsoever I have offended thee this day, either in thought, word, or deed; [*here mention such particulars, as you can*

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remem-

* *If you have any.*

remember.] Enable me, to resist and subdue every evil Inclination within, and every outward temptation. Assist me daily with thy Holy Spirit, to encrease in the knowledge and love of thee my God, and of my Saviour Jesus Christ; teach me the paths of thy commandments, whilst I am young; sanctify, whatever good instructions I have at any time received, from the piety and care of my parents, guardians, and teachers; and help me, carefully to remember them, and seriously to practise them. I praise thy holy name, O God, for all the blessings thou hast, this day, or at any time, shewn me; for all the helps, of preventing or restraining grace, thou hast vouchsafed me; for whatever I have done, which may be in any measure acceptable to thee; for all the progress I have made in my learning; for thy preservation of me, from all the calamities and dangers, to which frail mortality is every moment exposed; and particularly, for— [*here mention any particular blessings you recollect God has bestowed upon you this day.*] Take, I pray thee, my soul and body, into thy care this night: bless and protect me: and all the mercies, which I beg for myself, I heartily desire also, for all my friends and relations, and for all men; that we may all be guided in this present life, as to arrive safe in thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour; in whose most holy name and words I farther call upon thee, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A Morning Prayer, for a Servant.

O God, the great Creator and Preserver of all mankind; I bless and praise thy holy name, for all thy mercies to my soul and body: and, as thou hast given me another day, give me grace to spend it to thy honour and glory. I confess my corruption; do thou confirm and strengthen me: create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; and enflame my heart, with thy holy faith and love; that I may delight, in thy commandments; and that I may walk before thee in uprightness and fear, in faithfulness and honesty; constantly and chearfully depending upon thee; and doing the duty of my station, not with eye-service, but with singleness of heart; as knowing, that I shall be accountable to thee,

at

at the last day ; as well for those duties, which I owe my master and mistress ; as for those, which are more immediately to be paid to thee, my Creator, Preserver, and future Judge. Keep my tongue, from all opprobrious and reproachful language, and from all lying and slandering ; and my hands, from all injustice and deceit ; that I may neither waste my time, nor spare my labour, which are my master's by contract and agreement. Give me always a thankful, humble, and contented spirit : send thy blessing upon this whole family, to which I belong : sow in all our hearts the seeds of unfeigned charity, that we may all enjoy the comforts of a mutual affection, and assistance and aid in our several stations : and grant, that we may meet in the family of heaven ; there to adore and praise thee, to love and enjoy thee, to all eternity ; through Jesus Christ, my Lord ; in whose most holy name and words, I presume to say,

Our Father, &c.

An Evening Prayer, for a Servant.

THOU, O God, art my strength and the rock of my salvation. It is true, I am contented, that thou hast called me to be a servant ; but thou hast called me to be a son also, and an heir of eternal life : yet I have forgotten thee ; being more solicitous, for the bread that perishes ; than for thy favour, which is better than all the world. I have sinned, against my knowledge, thy word, and the motions of the Holy Ghost, by repining and murmuring at thy providence, and being discontented with my condition, [*Here mention thy particular sins :*] Of which, O my God, and of all my sins, I repent ; and humbly beg the assistance of thy grace, that I may do works meet for repentance, and serve thee in truth, and with an upright heart, all the days I have to live. O Lord, have mercy upon me, and forgive me all my offences : and give me grace, to withstand the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and sincerely to endeavour, to reform and amend my life ; that I may every day grow and increase in goodness, and be so much the fitter for death, the nearer I approach thereto. O give me grace, to discharge my duty faithfully : watch over me, and the whole family, to which I belong : let thine angels pitch
U 5 their

their tents about us this night, that we may lie down securely ; and let our sleep be sweet and refreshing to us, for Jesus Christ's sake ; in whose most holy name and words I beg all things, for which I am any way bound to pray ; saying,

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer, for Faith in God.

ALmighty and everlasting God, give unto me the increase of faith ; that I may obtain that, which thou dost promise : and make me heartily believe, what thou hast revealed, and love that, which thou dost command ; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for an holy Hope.

O God, in whom is all my dependence, and the hope of all the ends of the earth : let me never be destitute of a well-grounded hope ; nor yet possessed, with a vain presumption : suffer me not to think, that thou wilt either be reconciled to my sins, or reject my repentance : but grant me such a hope, as may be answerable to thy righteous promises ; even such a hope, as may both encourage and enable me, to purify myself from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, that so it may indeed bring me to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the Love of God, and of his Laws.

MOST mighty Lord God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men (thou, Lord, hast set before us, life and death, blessing and cursing ; with liberty, to chuse the one, and to avoid the other ; and hast annexed a present, as well as future reward, to our obedience to thy Laws ; so that the ways of religion are truly ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace) give me wisdom and understanding, that I may avoid the deceitful pleasures of this world ; and may see, know and chuse the things, which make for my peace, and in which my true and only happiness consists : and confirm in me this saving knowledge, that sin is the greatest of all evils ; that guilt and misery are always inseparable ; and that a good conscience, and the hopes of thy

thy favour and acceptance, are the only solid happiness to be attained in this life. Grant unto thy servant, that I may love the thing, which thou commandest; and desire that, which thou dost promise: and make me stedfast and immoveable, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandment; that so, among the sundry and many changes of the world, my heart may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found; that I may at last be received, into the inheritance of the saints in light, through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, my Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Sincerity towards God.

ALMIGHTY God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; who requirest, not only outward acts of duty, but the inward disposition of the mind: teach me, in all my religious actions, always to have an eye to thy authority, to obey thy laws, and to make the sense of my duty the prevailing motive of my piety: so that no privacy nor retirement may encourage me, to offend thee: nor any losses or crosses may hinder me, from doing or suffering thy blessed will and pleasure. Oh! grant me always that sincerity of intention; that devotion may not be made a pretext, to cheat or defraud my neighbour; nor yet the exercise, of justice and mercy towards men, be made a plea, for the neglect of my duty towards thee, my God: that my charity to the poor may never serve, to cover my intemperance; nor my sobriety exempt me, from feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, when it is in my power: and finally (to make my life all of one piece) that all the duties thou commandest may be shewn forth by my actions; that, my greatest desire and aim being thy glory, I may be accepted by thee, through the all-sufficient merits of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Sincerity towards Men.

GRANT, O Lord, that, in all my dealings and conversation with my fellow creatures, I may always use true simplicity and singleness of heart; and never compass any design, by false devices and appearances; nor betray my neighbour, by not performing my promise: that

that I may never abuse men, into a false opinion of themselves, by representing them to be better than I know them to be ; nor permit my tongue to speak otherwise, than out of the abundance of my heart ; but that my outward actions may be exactly agreeable, to my purposes and intentions : and this I beg, in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Humility.

MOST gracious God, who hast sent thy beloved Son to take upon him our human nature, that he might be to us a perfect pattern of humility ; enable me by thy grace, to imitate the same : make me sensible of my own vileness by reason of my sins, which are evident proofs of my weakness and folly ; and of my baseness and ingratitude, which makes me contemptible in thy sight, and ought to cover my soul with shame and confusion, instead of pride and vanity : check in me, all vain and aspiring thoughts, and wean me, from any fond opinion of my own abilities and excellencies O ! strengthen my faith and good resolutions ; that I may never purchase the praise of men, by mean flatteries and sinful compliances ; nor ever entertain their applause, even upon the best account, with too great delight ; lest it corrupt the purity of my intentions, and rob me of that reward thou hast promised to all those, who glorify thy name. Make me, I pray thee, more especially patient, to bear the indignities I may receive from others ; because I have deserved them from thee, and because thy Son has suffered the same upon my account. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of the same thy Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the Fear of God.

ALmighty God, whose power is infinite, and whose judgments are to be feared ; possess my soul, with an holy awe and reverence towards thee ; that I may give thee the honour due unto thy name, and never profane any holy thing ; nor sacrilegiously invade, what thou hast set apart for thy service. I believe, that, as thou art infinite in justice, thou wilt not clear the guilty ; and I know, I should tremble, at the very thought, of whatever might offend thee : O, let me not misplace my fear,
nor

nor be afraid of man ; but fill my soul, with that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom ; that I may thereby bridle all brutish appetites, and keep myself in a constant conformity to thy holy laws : and this I humbly beseech thee to grant unto me thy servant, in the name of Jesus Christ, thy Son, my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Trust in God.

MOST merciful God ; give me grace, in all difficulties and distresses, to have recourse unto thee ; and to depend on thy power, thy goodness, and thy promises. Thou hast promised to keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is staid on thee ; O, suffer not my heart, to be overcharged with the cares of this life ; but grant that (having practised an honest industry, and made use of all lawful means, for the improvement of my worldly affairs) I may chearfully commit myself to thy providence, casting all my care upon thee : and that seeking first thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof, I may stedfastly trust in thee, for such a measure of these outward things, as, in thy wisdom thou seest to be most expedient, for my advancement to the kingdom of thy Son : to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for our Benefactors.

ALmighty and everlasting God ; who makest me, both to will and to do those things, which are good and acceptable to thy divine Majesty ; I make my humble supplications to thee, for all my benefactors. Let thy fatherly hand, I beseech thee, ever be over them ; let thy holy Spirit ever be with them ; and so lead them, in the knowledge and obedience of thy word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Acts of Contrition, with Petitions for Pardon and Grace, that we may reform and amend our Lives.

O Lord, remember not the sins and offences of my youth ; but, according to thy mercy, think thou upon me. For

For thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin; for it is great.

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified.

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences.

Who can tell how oft' he offendeth? O cleanse thou me, from my secret faults!

Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

Shew me thy ways, O Lord; and teach me thy paths.

Pity, O Lord, the present frailty of thy servant; and suffer not my blindness to lead me into ruin.

Suffer not my frailties, to become habitual; lest I die impenitent, and perish without recovery.

O thou great Physician of souls, cure me of all my sinful distempers; and fix me, in an even and constant holiness.

Imprint on my mind this important truth; That the pleasures of sin are short and momentary, but the pain and torment eternal; and that the best that can follow, is a bitter repentance.

Almighty Lord God, mortify and kill all vices in me: and so strengthen me with thy grace; that, by the innocency of my life, and the constancy of my faith, I may glorify thy great and holy name.

Grant me the true circumcision of the Spirit; that, my heart and all my members being mortified from all worldly and carnal lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will.

Grant, that I (being regenerate, and made thy child by adoption and grace) may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, until I come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, unto a perfect man.

Enable me to love my enemies; to do good to those, that hate me; and to pray for them, that despitefully use me, and persecute me; in obedience to the command, and in imitation of the example, of my great Lord and Maker Christ Jesus.

A Prayer,

A Prayer, for a *meek and quiet Spirit*.

O Father almighty, and God of all comfort ; look with thy tenderest pity upon me, a weak and frail creature, who am encompassed about with many and great infirmities. My nature is corrupt, my passions are strong and violent ; and I am so prone to peevishness and anger, that almost every slight provocation disorders my mind : this is, what I bewail and lament ; humbly beseeching thee, to pardon all this my sin and folly ; and to give me a meek and quiet spirit, a patient and forgiving temper, and an humble, charitable, and christian disposition : that my mind may at all times, be quiet and easy ; my carriage, gentle, kind, and obliging unto all men ; and the whole conduct and deportment of my life such, as becomes the disciples of the meek and blessed Jesus ; who has taught me, when I pray, to say, *Our Father, &c.*

A Prayer, for *Chastity*.

HOLY, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts ! who art of purer eyes, than to behold iniquity ; whose Holy Spirit delighteth, to dwell in pure and chaste hearts ! I most humbly beseech thee, to send thy spirit of purity and holiness into my heart ; and to preserve me chaste and spotless, clean and undefiled in thy sight : that my body may be an holy temple, and my soul a sanctuary, fit for the reception of thy divine holiness. Forgive me all my past impurities, whether in thought, word or deed ; reprove in me the spirit of lust ; kindle the fire of thy holy love in my heart, and let it consume all my dross : that I may no more grieve thy blessed Spirit, by any work of darkness ; but that, after a chaste and religious life here, I may be presented before thy tribunal, washed and cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, and reign with thee for ever. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for *Temperance*.

O God, who madest every thing good, and givest all things richly to enjoy ; give me the spirit of temperance and sobriety, that I may use thy creatures, in the same measure and to the same purposes, for which thou

thou hast designed them. Forgive that intemperance, which I have been guilty of [*particularly* *] in meat, drink, apparel, and pleasure ; and never let my body any more be oppressed, with surfeiting and drunkenness, or the luxuries of this sensual life : but subdue my appetite, to reason and to thy grace ; that my table may be no more a snare unto me, nor my food become a temptation, a sin, or a disease ; but that I may henceforward hunger and thirst after righteousness, and account it my meat and drink to do thy will, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen*

* *Here mention, what you find yourself most guilty of.*

A Prayer, for *Patience*.

O My God, who has told me, that in this world we shall have tribulation : grant, that my present tribulation may work patience ; and that I may be submissive under the load thou hast thought fit to lay upon me ; whether it be thy immediate correction, or the injuries with which my fellow-creatures endeavour to oppress me : and for as much, as I suffer no more, than the common lot of all sinful mortals ; strengthen me, O Lord, that no pains or sufferings may ever drive me from thee ; but rather be a means to work in me a contempt of this world, a mortification of my lust, and a patient abiding of the cross ; so that I may finish my course with joy, and, at the last, rest from all my labours and troubles, with the redeemed and blessed of the Lord : which I wait and humbly beg for, at thy good hands, O most gracious Father, for the sake, and in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for *Diligence*.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast commanded man to till the earth, and to provide for his subsistence by his own labour and industry, when thou mightest justly have punished him eternally : enable me, to fulfil thy command ; and grant that I may, with care, diligence, and honest industry, provide for myself and those committed to my charge, by improving the talent thou hast entrusted me with ; and that I may make my calling and election sure, by a patient continuance in well doing : that
so,

so, labouring in thy work here, I may (not for the merit of my own works, but for the merits of Jesus Christ) rest from my labours in thy kingdom hereafter. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the Love of our Neighbour.

MOST merciful God, suffer me to exclude none from my charity, who are objects of thy mercy and tenderness ; but grant, that I may assist all my brethren with prayers and good intentions, where I cannot reach them by works of mercy. Let me be always ready to embrace all occasions, which may administer to their happiness, by assisting the needy, protecting the oppressed, instructing the ignorant, and reproving the wicked, profane and evil-doer in such a manner, that I may look upon the defects and frailties of my neighbour, as if they were my own, and so hide and conceal them : so that, making thy love to me (O God) the pattern of my love to them, I may above all things endeavour to promote their eternal salvation : and at last be received into the joy of my Lord, and sing everlasting praises to the Lamb, that was slain and sitteth on the throne, Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Charity.

O Lord, who hast taught me, that all my doings without charity are nothing worth ; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thy only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for true Piety and Regeneration.

LORD of all power and might, who art the Author and Giver of all good things : graft in my heart the love of thy name, encrease in me true religion, nourish me with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep me in the same ; so that, being regenerate and made thy child by adoption and grace, I may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ my Lord ; who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer,

A Prayer, for a right use of our Time.

MOST gracious God. I adore thy infinite goodness and patience, which hath not cut me off in the midst of my follies and sins. Grant me therefore, gracious Lord, that I may no longer abuse that precious time, which thou hast allotted me, to secure that happiness which is great in itself, and infinite in its continuance. Call me, from all those vain amusements, those trifling entertainments, and cruel diversions; which have robbed me of many valuable hours, and have endangered the loss of my immortal soul in the day of judgment. O then! teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom; so that, by diligence and honesty in my calling, by constancy and fervour in my devotions, by moderation and temperance in my pleasures and recreations, by justice and charity in all my words and actions, and by keeping a conscience void of offence both towards God and man, I may be able to give a good account thereof, when summoned before the judgment seat of Christ; at which I pray, that I may be accepted, in and through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ, my only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the care of the Soul.

GIVE me grace, O Lord; that I may prefer the good of my soul, before all things; continually remembering that, although it cannot die, it may sink into a state of endless punishment. Oh! therefore free me from the harms and flatteries of this world; lest they dissolve me into luxury, excess, and other unlawful pleasures: neither permit the terrors or torments, which wicked men are able to inflict, to shake my constancy, or interrupt my perseverance in the way of thy laws; but grant, that I may proceed in the strength thou hast given me; that, being sound stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, I may know that my labour is not in vain in the Lord; through Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer,

A Prayer, for the government of the Tongue.

GOVERN my lips, O Lord, that I offend not in my tongue; and shut out such discourses, as border the least upon evil-speaking, lying, and slandering: that it may never spread any evil reports, concerning my neighbour's reputation; nor make the deformity of his body, or the weakness of his mind, the subject of my mirth and raillery. Oh! grant, that I may never be so weak, as to encourage backbiters, either by listening to their insinuations, or by giving credit to their wicked inventions: but, as thou hast given me a tongue, that I might praise thee, and influence others to bless thy holy name; direct my words, chiefly to the promoting of thy glory, either by assuaging the pains of the afflicted, vindicating the injured reputation of my neighbour: uniting the minds of those, who are at variance; instructing those, who know thee not enough; entertaining all the world, O God, with thy greatness and goodness; enflaming all hearts, with thy love; and provoking them, to praise thee, to bless thee, and to glorify thee; that I may one day mingle my praises, with those of thy elect, translated to the mansions of eternal bliss, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used on *fasting Days* and during the *forty Days in Lent.*

O God, the Father; who didst send thy beloved Son into this world, for the sake of all mankind; and in human nature didst appoint him, to fast forty days and forty nights: give me grace, to use such abstinence; that, my flesh being subdued to the Spirit, I may ever obey thy godly motions, in righteousness and true holiness, to thy honour and glory, and the salvation of my own soul: through the merits and mediation of the same thy Son, Jesus Christ; who, with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for true Mortification.

ALmighty God, who madest thy blessed Son to be circumcised and obedient to the law for man: grant me the true circumcision of the Spirit; that my heart and all my members being mortified from all worldly and fleshly

ly lusts, I may in all things obey thy blessed will, through the same thy Son Jesus Christ, my Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for *Repentance.*

O Most mighty God, and merciful Father ; who hast compassion upon all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made ; who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin and be saved : mercifully forgive me my trespasses ; receive and comfort me, whom thou hast redeemed ; enter not into judgment with thy servant, who am vile earth, and a miserable sinner : but so turn thine anger from me, who meekly acknowledge my villenefs, and truly repent me of my faults : and so make haste to help me in this world, that I may ever live with thee in the world to come, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for *Assistance of Grace.*

O God, the strength of all, who put their trust in thee ; mercifully accept my prayers : and because, through the weakness of my mortal nature, I can do no good thing without thee ; grant me the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments, I may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ, my Lord *Amen.*

A Prayer, against *inordinate Anger.*

O God, give to thy servant a meek and gentle spirit ; that I may always be slow to anger, and easy to help and forgive : grant, that I may not be moved to intemperate wrath on every trifling occasion ; preserve me, from a peevish and contentious spirit ; and suffer me not, so far to give place to the devil, as to bear hatred and malice in my heart : and grant, that I may follow peace with all men ; being meek, humble and merciful ; bearing with the infirmities of others, and forgiving their offences, as I desire to be forgiven of thee ; through the merits of my blessed Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer,

A Prayer, under Losses and Damages in our Goods and Estates.

ALMIGHTY God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, the World is thine and the fulness thereof. Teach me to be content, as well when I am abased and suffer need, as when I abound : for, as it will profit a man nothing, to gain the whole world and to lose his soul ; so all the losses in the world cannot undo him, whose soul is safe in thy hand. Let me not grieve therefore, as I were undone, for what I have lost ; but incline my heart, to commit myself chearfully unto thee ; as knowing, that I have in heaven a better and an enduring substance of good things to come : and, since nothing is to be confided in here on earth, grant, that I may look less on temporal things, and so provide for the good of my soul, and be so rich towards God ; that when all here shall fail me, thou mayest be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever ; all which I humbly pray for, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, in Prosperity.

ALMIGHTY and most gracious God, who makest me to abound and to be full of thy good things, and surroundest me on every side with thy mercies ; I acknowledge, bless, and praise thee, for all thy special favours towards me : but, whereas I know not, what shall be on the morrow, nor how soon the sun may be hidden from my eyes ; I must not say in my prosperity, ‘ I shall never be moved : ’ grant therefore, that in the time of my health, and peace, and prosperity, I may remember and provide for the time of trouble, sickness, and death ; when the enjoyments of this world will be so far from being able to support and relieve me, that they will vanish away. Oh ! give me grace also, not to abuse the good things of this world ; but always to use them in humility, sobriety, and thy holy fear : and make me willing, as thou hast made me able, to refresh the bowels of such, as want what I enjoy ; and as freely to give, as I have received ; that riches may not be kept to my hurt : but as I have opportunity, enlarge my heart, to do good unto all. If thou, O Lord, shouldst make me poor, or send me any other affliction ; give me therewith a resigned and contented

tented heart, that I may praise thy name always : and grant, that, whatever I here enjoy, may never draw my heart from my duty ; but that all my plenty may be blessed and secured to me, with the fulness of thy grace ; that so, being rich in good works, my soul may prosper, and be well in thy blessed favour, and made glad with thy saving mercy and good acceptance of me, in and through the merits of thy Son, my Redeemer, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be said by such, as are *poor and low* in the World.

O God ; I believe, that, for just and wise reasons, thou hast allotted to mankind very different states and circumstances of life ; and, that all the temporal evils, which have at any time happened unto me, are designed by thee for my benefit : and, though thou hast though fit to place me in a mean condition, to deprive me of many conveniencies of life, and to exercise me in a state of poverty ; yet thou hast hitherto preserved and supported me by thy good providence, blessed me with
** Here recollect the blessings you enjoy, as health, assistance of friends, &c.* advantages * above many others, who labour under great troubles. O merciful Father, if thou seekest fit, bless me with such a portion of the comforts and conveniencies of life ; that thereby I may be enabled, to go on more cheerfully in my station, to serve thee better, to love thee more and more, and to admire more thy wonderful bounty and loving kindness : grant me health, strength, and abilities, suited to my circumstances ; that I may honestly provide for myself : support me, that I fall not into extreme want ; lay not more upon me, than thou shalt enable me to bear with patience ; and supply the want of worldly blessings, by the comfort and support of thy good spirit ; whereby I may be made perfect in every good work, and may become rich in faith, and an heir of thy kingdom. Grant, O Lord, that I may exercise all those christian graces and duties, which my present circumstances call for from me : let the sharpness of temporal wants put me upon considering, what misery must attend the loss of my soul ; let bodily hardships convince me, of the great evil of spiritual

tual wants ; let a sense of my present poverty stir up eager desires, after the true riches ; and the less I have of this world, the more careful let me be, to provide for the next, and to seek an inheritance incorruptible, and which fadeth not away. Inspire me with diligence and industry in my calling ; and, when I have done my endeavour, make me to cast all my care upon thee : let neither the contempt, which vain persons wrongfully cast upon poverty ; nor any evil, which I may endure, tempt me to any dishonest ways of living but let me rather chuse to be poor, than wicked ; and to want any thing, rather than thy blessing. For this good end, clothe me with a meek, and quiet, and humble spirit ; and with a thorough contentedness, in my present circumstances : that I may neither dare, to repine at my own condition, nor envy the prosperity of others. Raise up in my heart, to look unto Jesus ; who, to reconcile man to a state of poverty, chose to be born and live in a mean condition ; enduring hunger, and thirst, and cold ; and not having where to lay his head : that by his example, I may be encouraged to contemn the world ; and, having (through faith and patience) finished the race which thou hast set before me, I may be received into the joy of my Lord, for the sake of my Redeemer, thy ever-blessed Son Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used under Injuries, Abuses, or Provocations.

O God, whose beloved Son was evil-intreated, tempted, reviled, spit upon, mocked, and persecuted, even unto death ; and his blessed disciples had also trials of cruel mocking and scourgings, and of severe bonds and imprisonments : what then am I, that I should expect to escape the injuries, abuses, and provocations of this world ? Such (therefore) O Lord, as my folly and mis-carriage have made my enemies, enable me to appease, and to gain to my friendship : and for such, as hate me wrongfully, pardon their sin, open their eyes, purify their minds, and convert their hearts unto thee, that they may see their fault, be reconciled to thee, O God ; and then may live, as much as in them lieth, in peace with all men ; that we may at last live together in heaven. To this end mortify, in us all (I beseech thee) the carnal mind, which
is

is at enmity against thee ; and all those lusts, which war in our members, whence discords and fightings arise : unite us all, against the common enemy of our souls ; and join our hearts to thee, in thy true fear and love ; that we may not meditate revenge, but study to be quiet. All this we humbly pray, in the name of that great pattern of meekness, thy Son, my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for our persecutors.

O God, whose nature and property is always to have mercy and to forgive, shew mercy (I most humbly beseech thee) to all those who persecute me, though they neither shew justice nor mercy towards me : pity their ignorance ; remove those prejudices, which blind their eyes ; sweeten and soften their spirits, that they may no longer be carried away with malice and bitter passions ; and dispose them, by humility and meekness, and by a sincere love of truth and righteousness, to a joyful reception and acknowledgment thereof ; that they may lay aside their errors, and resolutely profess thy holy faith ; so that their repentance may turn away thine eternal vengeance, through the merits and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, my Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, against Covetousness.

ALMIGHTY God, the Author and Giver of all I enjoy ; govern my affections towards the things of this world, that no greediness of gain may tempt me to the least injustice, either by fraud or oppression ; but that I may commit myself to thy providence, in the use of honest endeavours ; that, while I am supporting a dying body, I may remember I have an immortal soul, which immediately deserves my greatest care. Teach me, to enjoy the good things, wherewith thou hast blessed me, as with temperance, so with thankfulness and charity ; and readily to part with them, rather than to forsake thy truth, or make shipwreck of a good conscience towards God or man. Fix my thoughts, my hopes, and my desires, upon heaven and heavenly things ; that, having always in view that crown of glory, which thou hast laid up for me here after, I may press towards the mark, for the prize of the high

high calling of God in Christ Jesus; and being strengthened by thy grace, and supported by thy holy Spirit, I may run with patience the race, which thou hast set before me: that, when the great day of retribution shall come, I may look up to my most merciful judge with joy and comfort, and may hear those ravishing words pronounced unto me; "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou, into the joy of thy Lord." And this I beg, in the name, and through the merits, of thy Son Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for *temporal Blessings*, and *Contentedness* in any Condition.

BLESSED Lord; who knowest, that, while we are in this life, we stand in need of its supplies; who hast promised to such as seek thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof, the addition of all other necessities; and hast also commanded us to ask of thee our daily bread, and to cast our care upon thee, for all the things we have need of for our comfort and support: give me such health and wealth, as shall be for my good; and, while I have life to be nourished, vouchsafe to grant, that I may not want the necessary blessings thereof: but enable me, to provide honestly for myself; and add thy blessing to my labours: if they be not sufficient to supply all my own necessities, do thou raise up friends and means to help me, that I may never be destitute of food and raiment; and give me grace to be content with that provision, which thy divine providence sees most convenient for me. Let neither prosperity be a means of my forgetting thee, nor adversity cause me to murmur against thy wise distributions to the sons of men: but teach me, how to want, as well as how to live in plenty; and sanctify all the comforts, thou hast, or shalt be pleased to bestow upon me; that I may use them to thy glory, and that they may raise in me that due praise, which I offer to thee my God, for all thy benefits to me and all the world, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used *on our Birth days.*

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind; by whose blessed will I was fearfully and wonderfully made in my mother's womb, and under whose blessed providence I have been kept up ever since I was born; I

praise and magnify thy glorious name, for thy great goodness towards me; humbly beseeching thee, that I may be taught, so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto heavenly wisdom; that I may know, that I was born to serve thee the living God; that I may bewail my past sins, and spend the rest of my days in a godly, righteous and sober life; that I may finish the remainder of my days, in thy fear and to thy glory: and that, as thou didst (as on this day) take me out of my mother's womb, to live here a little time; so thou mayest at the last day take me out of my grave, the womb of the earth, to live with thee for ever, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for an *easy and happy Death.*

O Most great and mighty God, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and who hast appointed for all men once to die: make me truly sensible, of the frailty and uncertainty of my life; and teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto true wisdom: that death may not surprise me, nor find me unprovided; that when the time of my departure shall come, I may look back upon a well spent life with joy and comfort, and may meet death without fear and amazement. Strengthen my faith, and suffer me not at my last hour, through any pains of body or weakness of mind, to let go my dependence upon thee; but grant, O most merciful Father, that I may be willing, and even desirous, to leave this world, when thou, my God, in thy great wisdom shalt see it fitting; and that, after a life spent here in thy service, I may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through the merits and for the sake of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord and only Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used by *one tempted to Presumption.*

O Righteous Lord, suffer me not to encourage myself in a groundless reliance upon thy favour, whilst in the mean time I am really unfit to receive thy Holy Spirit; neither let thy patience, and forbearance with me hitherto, work an expectation of my future happiness: but grant, that I may make such a progress in holiness, as that I may safely depend upon thy mercy and protection in this world, and thy promise of eternal happiness in the world to come,

not

not for any merits or works of my own, but purely through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used by *one troubled in Mind, or tempted to Despair.*

ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; I approach unto thee with confusion of face, when I think I could in any wise distrust thy goodness and mercy, after I have so abundantly experienced thy great favours, and have thy promise, that thou wilt hear the prayers of those that ask any thing in thy Son's name. O my God, pardon me this thought; and give me thy grace, to prevent its growth; and to conquer the temptation, which oppresses my heart with a fear and horrid dread, lest my portion be decreed among the reprobates. Most mighty Lord, I know thou art able and willing, to save me a repenting sinner: O, speak peace to my oppressed soul; and give me assurance, that thou art reconciled to me in the Son of thy Love; and that thou art my sword and my shield at present, and wilt hereafter be my exceeding great reward. Oh! lay not these doubts and fears to my charge: but so dispose my mind, and confirm my trust and confidence in thee, that a remembrance of my sins may never drive me to despair of thy mercy; but may, on the other hand, force me to flee to my Saviour, and sue for his intercession on my behalf; and may put me upon an unwearied attendance on my duty, thereby to fit me for a sure confidence in his all-sufficient merits. O most gracious Lord, not only pardon all my transgressions for his sake; but convince me, before I go hence and be no more seen, that thou hast done it for my satisfaction and comfort; that so I may here rejoice in thy favour, before I am taken into the joy of my Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer, in time of Temptation.

ALMIGHTY God, and most merciful Father, who art greater than all things; send down thy help from above, and deliver me from the temptations, which now attack me: and as I put my trust in thee, O let me never be put to confusion; nor suffer me to be tempted, above that I am able to bear; but make me a way to escape,

that I may not sin against thy divine Majesty. Make me seriously to consider the great folly and danger of sin ; that its pleasures are short, but that its punishments are endless and intolerable ; that no satisfaction can compare with the joys of a good conscience, nor any trouble be like that of a wounded spirit. Give me a sure token of the terrible state of those, who fall under the rod of thy displeasure ; convince my conscience of the sinfulness, of what I am now tempted unto ; and shew me its contradiction to thy will and my baptismal vows : give me, I pray thee, the light of thy word, that I may not be deceived by this wicked world ; but may certainly know, that, how pleasant soever it may now appear, there will come a time, when this and all other enticements of this world will appear vain and contemptible ; a time, when all workers of iniquity shall be destroyed, and when a crown of righteousness shall be given to them, who have fought the good fight, and kept the faith unto the end. Grant therefore, that the mighty power of thy grace may so raise my courage, and strengthen my faith, that nothing may stop me in my christian warfare ; but that, fighting manfully under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh and the devil, I may at last triumph with him in his heavenly kingdom ; to whom, with thee (O Father) and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used *by one engaged* (or likely to be engaged) *in a Law-suit.*

ALMIGHTY God, to whom all judgments belong ; to thee I submit myself, in the cause, wherein I am [*likely to be*] engaged : convince me, if I be under any mistake ; direct and assist me, under all the difficulties and incumbrances, which I am like to meet ; and, in thy good time, put a happy and peaceable end to the business, which I [*am about to undertake, or*] have begun. Oh ! grant me that wisdom from above, which is peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated ; that laying aside all fondness and partiality, I may continually practise that christian law, of doing as I would that others should do to me : so that, contending for right more than victory, nothing may be done through malice, strife, pride, or vain glory ; nor be prevailed upon, to transgress the laws of justice and charity,

charity, for any worldly advantage ; that I may submit the event, to thy fatherly wisdom and disposition. Let the remembrance, of thy mercies and forgiveness towards me, fill my heart with such a christian love and compassion ; that I may never contend with my neighbour, to gratify my own corrupt nature ; nor take delight in his sufferings : but let the sense, of what thou hast done and suffered for me, banish all covetous desires from my soul, and excite in me a compassion towards thy distressed members ; for thy sake forgiving my fellow-servants, as I hope myself to be forgiven, when thou shalt come to judge the quick and the dead at the last day. All this I most humbly beg, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used *by one, who deliberates upon Marriage.*

MOST gracious God, who hast instituted the holy estate of matrimony, as the only way to continue the world ; and for the comfort of man's life, under the various evils, cares and labours thereof ; by the mutual society and help, which married persons ought to have, one for the other, both in prosperity and adversity ; and for the good of human society in general : grant, that, as I now have thoughts of entering into that state, I may so seriously consider the chief end of its institution, and the solemn vow and promise I shall then make ; as not to enterprize the same unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly ; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of Thee ; considering that, if I marry, my future happiness and misery of life will very much depend thereupon :

[and (forasmuch as I am young, unexperienced in the ways of this life, and under the care and direction of others) give me an obedient heart, that I may hearken and submit to their good advice, and their better judgment, in this matter, even as I expect thy blessing.] Grant, that reason and religion, prudence and consideration, and (above all) thy good providence, may direct my choice: and let me also aim chiefly at religion and virtue, wisdom and discretion, and such other good qualities and dispositions in a partner, as are most likely to last and continue ; and not at such only, as please for a time, and at last may prove the cause of discontent : and this I beg, through

This is to be used, by one under the care of parents or guardians.

the mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used by a Woman with Child.

ALMIGHTY God, the fountain of life, I adore thy infinite wisdom, which has begun an excellent work in me ; beseeching thee, to perfect the same work of thy hand, with the due shape and full growth ; and to preserve me, from all frights and accidents, which might cause me to miscarry of this child. Strengthen and enable me, to go through all the pain and uneasiness of child-bearing, with patience and submission to thy will : give me an humble trust and dependence on thy fatherly care and good providence ; and make me, in thy good time, a joyful mother of a hopeful child : which may be endued with an understanding soul, and blessed in mind, as well as in body ; that it may be able, to know thy goodness, dread thy power and justice, and live to be an instrument of thy glory ; and, by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in its generation, may, in thy good time, be received into thy everlasting kingdom, and joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, before making a Will.

GIVE me time, O Lord, before I go hence and be no more seen, to make such a discreet and prudent settlement of my worldly affairs, that I may do no injustice to any branch of my family. Be thou graciously pleased, to entail a blessing upon the substance I shall leave behind me ; and let those, to whom I give and bequeath it, rise up like olive plants, and flourish under the protection of thy good providence. Oh ! let them not, like slothful servants, bury their talents in a napkin, or squander away their inheritance by riotous living : but let them endeavour, by an honest industry, in their several stations and employments, to support themselves creditably in this world, and so wisely to manage their temporal concerns, as may most effectually conduce to the eternal interest of their immortal souls, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer,

A Prayer, for the King and Queen, the Royal Family, and for all Rulers and Magistrates.

AL MIGHTY Lord, by whom kings do reign, and princes decree justice ; and who hast commanded me to pray for kings, and for all that are in authority : I, both in duty and inclination, become a petitioner to thy divine Majesty, for *GEORGE* and *CHARLOTTE* thy servants, our King and Queen. Give thy judgments, O God, unto the King ; that he may judge thy people righteously, and break his enemies in pieces. Bless him with the spirit of Government, to punish the wicked, and to reward the good. O ! make him sensible of his duty to thee, and his subjects obedient to him for thy sake. O God, fill his heart with thy fear and love, that the righteous may flourish in his days, with abundance of peace, and with the liberty and free possession of the gospel. Defend him from all secret conspiracies and open violence : bless his arms with success and victory : direct his councils, and prosper all his endeavours for the welfare of these nations ; so that his government may flourish with happiness and prosperity : and finally, grant, that he may so rule in this earthly kingdom, that he may come to live and reign with thee in thy heavenly kingdom for evermore. I humbly beseech thee, to bless his royal highness, *George* prince of *Wales*, and all the Royal family : endue them with thy Holy Spirit ; enrich them with thy heavenly grace ; prosper them with all happiness ; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom. Bless, O Lord, all our rulers and governors, with spirits suitable to their stations ; and make all, who are put in authority under the king, truly and indifferently to administer justice, for the punishment of wickedness and vice, and for the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue : so that they may be able to curb and suppress all vice and ungodliness, and defend and encourage whatever is holy, just and righteous. Endue them with wisdom to understand, with hearts to consider, and with abilities to repair the breaches, and to redress the grievances of all such, as come before them : and grant, that all rulers may so govern, and all subjects so obey ; that they may always deserve thy hea-

venly grace, assistance, protection, and salvation : which I ask in the name, and for the sake and righteousness, of thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the Clergy.

O God, who of thy great goodness hast set apart an order of men, on purpose to guide and govern us, and to direct and assist us in matters of our eternal salvation : grant, that all those, who dedicate themselves to the service of thy altar, may be inwardly moved by thy Holy Spirit, to take upon them that sacred ministration ; that their consciences may testify to them, that, by engaging in this holy calling, their chief design is, to serve thee, to promote thy glory, and to edify thy people : for which end, I humbly pray, that they may make thy word the chief subject of all their studies ; that they may thence instruct thy people committed to their charge, and silence gainsayers ; that they may faithfully and diligently administer thy holy sacraments ; that they may labour, in season and out of season, by private and public admonitions and exhortations ; that they may maintain peace and love among all christians, and frame themselves and their families according to the precepts of thy holy gospel. Grant also, that I may always reverence and respect them, because they have a peculiar relation to thee ; that I may sincerely love them, because of those great benefits I receive by their administrations : that I may readily and cheerfully provide for their maintenance, because the Lord hath ordained, that they, who preach the gospel, should live of that gospel ; and that he, that is taught in the word, ought to communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things : that I may never rob them of their just rights, by the least sacrilegious encroachment ; that I may earnestly pray for them, because thy divine assistance is so necessary to crown their labours with success ; for, though Paul planteth, and Apollos watereth, it is thou, O Lord, that givest the increase. Above all, make me careful to obey those, who have the rule over me ; because they watch for my soul, as they, who must give an account ; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief ; that so, by a faithful discharge of my duty to my spiritual superiors, I may continue a sound member of thy church

church here upon earth, and may live for ever in the society of the church triumphant in heaven, singing praises and hallelujahs to the blessed and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the *Religious Societies.*

‘ **O** Lord almighty, faithful and true ; who by thy
 ‘ holy prophet * hast told us, “ That, from the
 ‘ rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,
 ‘ thy name shall be great among the gentiles ; and, in
 ‘ every place, incense shall be offered unto thy name, and
 ‘ a pure offering ; for thy name shall be great among the
 ‘ heathen.” Bless and prosper, I beseech thee, the en-
 ‘ deavours of the Society, established among us, for the
 ‘ propagation of the gospel in foreign parts : take thou
 ‘ from them, to whom the glad tidings of salvation shall
 ‘ be preached, all ignorance, hardness of heart, and con-
 ‘ tempt of thy word ; so that thy word being sown in
 ‘ good and honest hearts, may bring forth fruit abundant-
 ‘ ly, to thy honour, and the salvation of their souls : and
 ‘ grant that all, who have heard and received it, may live
 ‘ according to its doctrine and precepts ; and, by holi-
 ‘ ness of life, and zeal for thy glory, may become emi-
 ‘ nent examples to all about them. Bless all the religious,
 ‘ and other societies among us, for christian conference
 ‘ and works of charity ; for the promoting of christian
 ‘ knowledge and practice, amongst the poor and ignorant ;
 ‘ and for putting the laws in execution, against the vi-
 ‘ cious and profane. O Lord, encrease the number of
 ‘ these societies : grant them all, to chuse the best and
 ‘ most inoffensive means of accomplishing their several
 ‘ ends ; and to prosecute them diligently, and with a
 ‘ zeal directed by wisdom and prudence ; and grant, that
 ‘ all of them, being free from all worldly interests, may
 ‘ steadfastly pursue the advancement of thy glory, and
 ‘ the good of mankind : and grant, O God, that no good
 ‘ thou shalt vouchsafe to bring about by their poor en-
 ‘ deavours, may tempt them to think highly of themselves,
 ‘ but modestly and humbly. Remove all unreasonable
 ‘ prejudices, against their designs ; shed forth thy love
 ‘ abroad,

X 5

‘ abroad, in their hearts ; that they may chearfully embrace all opportunities, of doing good to the souls and bodies of men, and not be discouraged at any difficulties or oppositions they may meet. O God, hear their prayers, for themselves and others : defend them, from the rage of Satan and from the malice of evil men ; perfect holiness, more and more, in their hearts ; unite them more to one another, in thy truth, and in the bond of love ; and make them zealous of all good works, according to the command and examples of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good : for whose sake, I beseech thee, to hear me. *Amen.*

The following Prayers and Thanksgivings are suited to the Twelve ARTICLES of the Belief.

A Prayer, to One God and Three Persons.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto all thy servants grace ; by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity ; and, in the power of the divine Majesty, to worship the Unity : I beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep me stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend me from all adversities ; who livest and reignest one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving, for the Birth of Christ.

IT is very meet, right, and my bounden duty ; that I should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty everlasting God ; because thou didst give Jesus Christ, thine only Son, to be born (as at this time) for me : who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made very man, of the substance of the virgin Mary, his mother ; and that without spot of sin, to make me clean from sin, therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name ; evermore praising thee, and saying, ‘ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts !
‘ Heaven

‘Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high!’ *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the Benefits of Christ's Death.

I Beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into my hearts ; that, as I have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel ; so, by his cross and passion, I may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving, for the Resurrection.

ALMIGHTY God ; who, through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, hast overcome death, and opened unto me the gate of everlasting life ; I humbly beseech thee, that, as by thy special grace, guiding and assisting me, thou dost put into my mind good desires ; so, by thy continual help, I may bring the same to good effect, through Jesus Christ, my Lord ; who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving, for the Ascension.

IT is very meet, right, and my bounden duty ; that I should, at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, through thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, my Lord ; who, after his most glorious resurrection, manifestly appeared to his Apostles ; and in their sight ascended up into heaven, to prepare a place for us ; that, where he is, thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name ; evermore praising thee, and saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts ! Heaven and Earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee O Lord most high !’ *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Preparation for Judgment.

ALMIGHTY God, give me grace, that I may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon me the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, (in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit the world in great

great humility;) that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the quick and dead, I may rise to the life immortal, through him, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

A Thanksgiving, for the Descent of the Holy Ghost.

IT is very meet, right, and my bounden duty; that I should, at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee; O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord: according to whose most true promise, the Holy Ghost came down from heaven, with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind; in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the apostles; to teach them, and to lead them into all truth; giving them both the gifts of divers languages, and also boldness, with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations; whereby the world hath been brought, out of darkness and error, into clear light and true knowledge of thee and of thy Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, I laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising thee, and saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts! Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high!' *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the Preservation of the Church.

O Lord, I beseech thee, to keep thy church and household continually in thy true religion; that they, who do lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace, may evermore be defended by thy mighty power, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Forgiveness of Sin.

ALmighty and everlasting God; who art always more ready to hear, than I to pray; and art wont to give more, than either I desire or deserve: pour down upon me the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving me those things, whereof my conscience is afraid; and giving me those good things, which I am not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ thy Son, my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer, for the *Profession of our Faith in the Resurrection.*

I Believe, that, by the virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all the dead shall rise, bad as well as good; for death is swallowed up in victory. I believe, that, by the almighty power of Jesus Christ, all shall rise, with the same bodies they had on earth; that their scattered dust shall be gathered into the same form again; that my soul shall be re-united to my body; that I shall be judged, both in body and soul, for the sins committed by both: that the bodies of the wicked shall be fitted for torments; and the bodies of the saints changed in quality, and made glorified bodies, immortal and incorruptible, fitted for heaven, and eternally to love and enjoy God: for which glorious vouchsafement, I do most humbly pray, and will always praise and love my Creator and Redeemer; to whom, with the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end! *Amen.*

A Prayer, for *Life Everlasting.*

GRANT, O Lord; that, as I am baptized, into the death of thy blessed Son my Saviour Jesus Christ: so, by continually mortifying my corrupt affections, I may be buried with him; and that, through the gate and the grave of death, I may pass to a joyful resurrection, for his merits; who died, and was buried, and rose again for me; thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord! *Amen.*

A short

A short *Paraphrase*, or *Explication*,
 OF THE
 LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, which art in Heaven.

THIS is a solemn invocation on God, as the maker and governor of the world, and Father of all christians in Christ Jesus; in whose name alone, I say this prayer, and hope for the acceptance thereof. I say *our Father*, and not *my Father*; because I believe God to be a common Father, whom all may resort unto; and also, that I may declare my communion with, and good-will to all my brethren, of the same household of faith: and I add, *which art in heaven*; because the throne of his power and glory is in heaven. Hence we learn, that God is the fountain of all goodness; and is able, and willing, to support us; that we ought to pray for others, as well as ourselves; and to join together, in common prayer, for common wants; and that, whenever we present our petitions to him, we ought to do it with the most serious consideration, the profoundest humility, and the utmost devotion and reverence we are capable of. There is one thing farther, to be taken notice of, upon this head: That the expression, *Our Father which art in Heaven*, (where-with, our Lord teaches us, to begin this Prayer) is a Preface, both to the whole Prayer, and to every Petition in particular.

Hallowed be thy Name.

THE Name of God, here, is to be extended and applied, not only to God himself, his titles and attributes; but to his word and ordinances, and to places, times, persons, and things, separated from common use,
 and

and set apart for the honour and service of his name ; that all, and every one of them, may be treated after an *holy* manner ; by having such esteem and regard paid to them, as is due to each of them respectively. Hence we learn, that the glory of God should be our chief aim, and the governing end of all our actions ; that this name ought to be adored and magnified by us, and all the world ; and that we should endeavour, to promote the honour of it, by an exemplary behaviour in all other instances of piety and holiness.

Thy Kingdom come.

HERE we pray, for the *coming* of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ ; a kingdom, of a spiritual nature ; founded in direct opposition to the kingdom of satan, and for the destruction of sin and death ; having its beginning in grace here, and its completion in eternal glory hereafter. Therefore, in this petition, we pray ; that God would bring all those, who are yet in a state of darkness, into the pale of Christ's church ; and that his grace would so rule, in the hearts of all christians, that they may be fit to be translated to that kingdom, which is to be the portion of the saints in the world to come ; and this as soon as God pleases. By this we are taught, That it is our duty, to beware of hindering the propagation of the gospel, or of endangering our own salvation, by giving any just occasion of offence ; to subdue every rebellious lust ; and to be obedient, even in our hearts and thoughts to the spiritual laws of his kingdom ; having none other ambition, than to reign with Christ our king in his eternal glory.

Thy Will be done, in Earth, as it is in Heaven,

IN this petition we request, that all rational creatures, (being filled with the knowledge of God's will ; and proposing that will as the rule of their actions, and the doing of it as the great business of their short time here on earth) may live, under a sense of his over-ruling providence ; and quietly submit to all, even the afflicting dispensations thereof ; and may yield such an obedience, to the laws given them to live by here, as the inhabitants of heaven do to the government under which they live, in
the

the presence of God. To this pattern, we must so far conform ; as to perform the commands of God, universally, without exception ; readily, without delay ; cheerfully, without uneasiness ; constantly, without intermission ; and sincerely, without hypocrisy : and then, if our obedience only bear such a proportion to our present state and condition, as the obedience of angels does to theirs, we need not doubt our being made equal to them hereafter, in perfection both of obedience and happiness.

Give us this Day our Daily Bread.

IN this petition, we pray ; that God, upon whom all creatures depend for their subsistence, will be graciously pleased, to give to us his children, day by day, all things necessary for our bodily sustenance ; and sufficient also for the support of that condition of life, wherein his providence hath placed us ; and therewith his blessing also, in the use and enjoyment of them. It teacheth us also, to account that bread only to be our own, and the gift of God ; which is procured by our honest labour and industry, or comes to us by some direct and lawful means ; to rest satisfied and contented with that portion, whatever it be, which is dispensed to us in one or other of those ways ; and likewise to provide, but not to be solicitous, for futurity : and (with prayer for what we want, and thankfulness for what we have) to depend entirely upon our heavenly Father, for so much of this world's good, as he knows to be best for us, in order to that life to come ; which we ought to be chiefly intent upon, in this our mortal state.

Forgive us our Trespases ; as we forgive them, that trespass against us.

IN this petition, by trespass against God, are meant all sins, of what kind or degree soever ; which, being the great debts we owe to his vindictive justice, are said to be forgiven, when, the punishment of them is remitted by his mercy : and, by trespasses against us, are meant the injuries, either by word or deed, done to us by any of our fellow creatures ; which, if they be small and inconsiderable, may be said to be forgiven, when they are passed over, either without notice taken of them, or (how-
ever)

ever) upon the acknowledgment of the offender: but, if they be great wrongs, for which farther satisfaction ought in reason to be made; then the forgiveness of them consists, in forbearing personal revenge, and having recourse only to public justice for recompence, if it cannot otherwise be obtained. Yet this is not a full discharge, of the duty of christian forgiveness; unless we be also ready, as occasion offers, to perform all offices of humanity to those, who have injured us; and unfeignedly pray for their repentance and salvation. This petition, thus explained, teacheth us, that we are all (in a higher or lower degree) sinners against God; and that it is our duty, with undissembled confession of our sins, earnestly to implore his fatherly compassion in the forgiveness of them, for Christ's sake. But it is a very dangerous error, to suppose; that, if we confess our sins continually to God, and return again to the practice of them, we shall be absolved in course; for all such confessions, whether to God or to the priest, are but mockeries of religion: without real amendment and reformation of manners, there is no such thing as forgiveness of sin. We farther learn hence; that, as charity in forgiving is an acceptable qualification of a penitent's prayer for pardon, and will render it available in the sight of God; so it is a condition of such indispensable (because equitable) obligation, that without it God will not forgive us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from Evil.

IN this petition, we are taught; that although God does never tempt any man to do evil, yet he is sometimes pleased, by very severe trials, to make proof of the faith and constancy of his servants; and that we are moreover in daily danger (from our own corrupt nature, and from the seducements of the world and the devil) of being led into such temptations, as would be too hard for us, and overwhelm us in the sad evils of guilt and misery; if, by our tempting of God, we should provoke him, to withdraw his grace, and leave us to ourselves. Therefore we here pray, that God will be pleased, either wholly to keep us from falling into any strong temptation to daily sin; or, if he see fit to permit this, that he will not forsake

fake us, but give us strength sufficient for the combat, and safely lead us through this state of warfare and probation, to that state, where we shall be free from all evil, and from all temptation to it.

For, thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.

THIS is no petition, but a praising and glorifying of God; that we may hence learn, not only to pray for what we want; but to return him love, and praise, and adoration, for what we receive; and that the end of all may be his glory. Therefore, as we began this prayer, with *hallowed be thy Name*; so, when we have begged of God all necessities for our souls and bodies, we conclude with this form of praise, as it is fit we should in all our prayers:

For thine is the Kingdom; that is, thine is the sovereignty and dominion, over all the world; and therefore thou hast an infinite right, to dispose of all things:

Thine is the Power; that is, thou art omnipotent, or able to do all things; and therefore thou art most able to grant, what we humbly pray for.

Thine is the Glory; that is, to thee we give honour, praise, and adoration, in these and all our devotions: and if thou, O God, wilt answer our petitions, and grant what we request, to thee shall be returned the praise and glory for all ages. This doxology therefore is not barely a conclusion of the whole; but also a ground or reason of every part, and a foundation for every petition in particular.

Amen.

By *Amen* (or *so be it*) we declare our firm belief, that God can grant, what we pray for; and our earnest hope and fervent desire, that he will do it, for the sake of him, in whom *all the promises are yea and Amen*, even the Lord Jesus.

Pious

PIOUS EJACULATIONS.

For Pardon of Sins.

I Will arise and go to my Father; and will say unto him, 'Father; I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son!'

Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for, in thy sight, shall no man living be justified.

If we say, that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: but, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness: according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

For I acknowledge my faults; and my sin is ever before me.

Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

For Graces, or Improvement and Advancement, in a Christian Life.

LORD, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.

Hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

Make thou thy servant to delight in that which is good.

Grant that all carnal affections may die in me; and that all things, belonging to the spirit, may live and grow in me.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

O God of peace, sanctify me wholly; that my whole spirit, soul and body, may be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! *Amen.*

For

For the *Light* of God's Countenance, or *Mercy*.

OUT of the deep, have I called unto thee, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice.

O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint.

Lord, why abhorrest thou my soul, and hidest thy face from me? O hide not thou thy face from me, nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme, to mark what is amiss;

O Lord, who may abide it?

Shew thy servant the light of thy countenance.

Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; and save me for thy mercies sake.

Comfort the soul of thy servant; for, unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, for this time forth for evermore.
Amen.

For *Deliverance* in Time of *Trouble*.

I Am brought into so much trouble and misery, that I go mourning all the day long.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord: for I am in trouble, and mine eyes are consumed for very heaviness; yea my soul and my body.

Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper!

Deliver me, from the hands of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me!

For sake me not, O Lord, my God; but haste thee to help me, O Lord, God of my salvation!

Acts of Adoration and Thanksgiving.

PRAISE the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, praise his holy name!

Thy righteousness, O God, is very high; great things, O Lord, are they, that thou hast done. O God, who is like unto thee?

Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength; so will we sing, and praise thy power.

Blessing and honour, glory and power, thanksgiving and praise, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne; and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!

To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever! *Amen!*

Heads

Heads of Self-Examination, *

Especially

Before Receiving the LORD'S SUPPER.

A N D

Very needful at all times to be perused with Diligence by those, who would fully know, rightly confess, and sincerely repent † of their sins : With References to the Page where each of these Heads are treated of in the NEW WHOLE DUTY OF MAN.

Of our Duty to GOD.

FAITH.

DOST thou believe there is a God ? Page 23

—That he made thy soul immortal ? 1, 7, 11

—That he will reward thee in a future state according to thy works ? 116, 135

Dost thou believe in his holy word ? 24

—In his affirmations, commands, promises and threatnings therein contained ? 25

Hast thou lived according to that belief ? 25

HOPE.

DOST thou hope in God's mercy ? 26

Hast thou been presumptuous, or neglected thy duty to God ? 27

Hast thou despaired, or mistrusted his mercy ? 28, ibid.

LOVE.

DOST thou love God above all things ? 29 & seq.

Dost thou love God for his own excellencies ? 31

—For his kindness to us ? ib.

Hast thou desired to please him ? ib.

—To do his will in all his commands and institutions ? 32, 33

—And, to enjoy him in heaven ? 34

FEAR.

HAST thou dreaded the justice of God, so as to be deterred from sin by it ? 34

Hast thou feared man, more than God ; or committed sin, to avoid the displeasure or punishment of man ? 35

TRUST.

HAST thou put thy whole trust in the power and promises of God to deliver thee out of all dangers and distresses ? 37

Hast thou sought to deliver thyself therefrom by any sin ? 39

Hast thou brought thy sins upon thee by rashness and folly ? 41

Hast

* See Sunday 6. Sect. ii.

† See Sunday 7. Sect. vi.

Hast thou used care and prudence
in all thy endeavours? 40

Hast thou believed dreams or tellers
of fortune? 41

Hast thou gone to witches or cunning
men for council, or for the
recovery of things lost? 41

Hast thou pretended, to foretell
things to come, by the stars or
magic art? 41

Hast thou used charms, or supersti-
tious words or actions, for the
cure of Diseases, or any thing
else? 41

Hast thou depended on God for the
supply of what thou wantest? 41

Hast thou been immoderately care-
ful about worldly things? 41

Hast thou neglected to labour, and
expected that God should sup-
port thee in idleness? 40

Hast thou always called upon God
for a blessing on thy honest en-
deavours? 41

HUMILITY.

Hast thou a due esteem for God? 42

Hast thou with all submission re-
signed thyself to the will of God? 42

Hast thou considered thine own
corrupt state, and the unwor-
thiness of all thy works? 42

Hast thou patiently borne all afflic-
tions, which God permits to
come upon thee? 41

Art thou thankful for his fatherly
corrections? 43

Hast thou amended thy life under
the chastisements of the Lord? 43

Hast thou obeyed his commands
and with cheerfulness done thy
duty in that state of life, which
God has placed thee in? 43

Hast thou been contented in every
state and condition of life? 44

Hast thou preferred God and eter-
nal happiness to all the enjoy-
ments of this world? 45

HONOUR.

Hast thou honoured God in all
the appointed ways of his wor-
ship, and reverently used those
things that bear any relation to
him? 46

—By doing your duty to, and in,
his house? 47

—By honouring his ministers? 49

—By providing for their mainte-
nance? 49

Hast thou committed sacrilege by
tricks or shifts; or by open vio-
lence kept back or refused to pay
tithes in whole or in part; or
defrauded the clergy of their
maintenance? 51

Hast thou profaned the Lord's-day
by doing unnecessary business
thereon, as hiring servants, pay-
ing them wages, gathering pa-
rish-taxes, settling accounts, and
paying needless visits to friends
and relations? 51

Hast thou neglected to observe the
Feasts and Fasts of the church
set apart for God's honour and
service? 51

Hast thou doubted of the christian
institution of the sabbath on the
first day of the week instead of
the seventh day? 51

Hast thou read and heard the scrip-
tures with respect and reverence,
humility and modesty, and with
earnest prayers for the under-
standing thy duty? 58

Hast thou believed the scriptures to
be the rule of faith? 58

Hast thou taught, or procured that
those under thy care should be
taught their catechism? 60

Dost thou place thy religion in go-
ing to church, and attending on
prayers and hearing sermons,
without endeavouring after what
you pray for, or minding to
practise what you hear? 61

Hast thou endeavoured to lessen
the esteem of the preacher, or
of his discourse? 61

Hast

Haſt thou honoured God in his ſacraments ? 61

Haſt thou kept thy vows made for thee at baptiſm ? 64

Haſt thou renounced the devil and all his works, viz. all wickedneſs and vice, and the temptations thereunto ? 65

Haſt thou renounced the pomps and vanities of this world, and all its ſinful cuſtoms ? 65, 66

Haſt thou renounced all the ſinful luſts of the fleſh, as adultery, fornication, idolatry, hatred, variance, ſeditious, envyings, drunkenneſs, murder, revilings, &c. ? 67

Haſt thou believed all the articles of the chriſtian faith ? 67

Haſt thou endeavoured, and prayed for God's grace to keep his commandments ? 67

Haſt thou believed, that thou art obliged to keep theſe vows all the days of thy life ? 68

THE ARTICLES OF BELIEF.

HAſt thou believed in the Trinity, or that there are three perſons in the Godhead ? 74

Haſt thou believed, that there is but one God ? 75

—That he is the father of all mankind ? 75

—That he is Almighty ? 76

—That he made the world, and all things therein out of nothing ? 76

—That his providence continually directs and governs the iſſues and events of all things ? 77

—That nothing happens, but by the determinate council of God ? 77

Haſt thou ſubmitted thy judgment or reaſon to the revealed word of God ? 77, 82

Second Article.

Haſt thou believed in the truth and excellency of the chriſtian religion ? 72, 143

Haſt thou believed in Jeſus Chriſt ?

—That he is the promiſed Meſſiah ? 83

—That he was a prophet, a prieſt, and a king ? 84

—That he is our Lord by right of purchaſe and redemption ? 85

—That chriſtianity is the only way to obtain eternal life ? 85

Third Article.

Haſt thou believed, that the Son of God was conceived in the virgin Mary's Womb, by the over-ſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt ? 93

—That he was born of the virgin Mary, and became a perfect man ? 92, 94

Fourth Article.

Haſt thou believed, that Chriſt ſuffered for the ſins of man, to reconcile him to the juſtice of God ? 96

—That he was crucified ? 96

—That his blood is the price of our redemption ? 98

—That he did really die ; and draws thee to God, by his precepts, and examples, and Grace ? 99

Haſt thou endeavoured, to obey and imitate him, and pray for his grace ? 102

Haſt thou believed, that he was buried ? 103

Fifth Article.

Haſt thou believed that Chriſt roſe from the dead by his own power ? 103

Sixth Article.

Haſt thou believed that Chriſt aſcended into heaven in his human nature ? 107

—That he is always interceding for us with God ? And 108

—That there is no other advocate between God and man, but the man Chriſt Jeſus ? 109

Seventh

Seventh Article.

Hast thou believed, that Christ will come in his human nature to judge the world at the last day? 110

—That all judgment is committed to him by God the Father? 110

—That both angels and men shall then be judged according to their deeds? 112

—That there shall be degrees of punishments and rewards? 116

Eighth Article.

Hast thou believed in the Holy Ghost? And 118

—That he enlightens our understandings, excites our wills, and strengthens our endeavours for every thing that is good? 119

Ninth Article.

Hast thou believed, that Christ founded a church, that should spread over all nations, and should never fail? 121

Tenth Article.

Hast thou rightly considered, what is the nature of sin, which sets man at enmity with God? 124

Hast thou believed, that all thy sins truly repented of are forgiven through Christ? 125

Eleventh Article.

Hast thou believed, that the same body, thou at present hast, shall rise again at the last day? And 103, 127

—That it shall be judged, and rewarded or punished according to its deeds, together with thy soul? 132

Twelfth Article.

Hast thou believed, that God will reward the good with an eternal life of happiness, and punish the wicked with eternal misery? 133

And hast thou endeavoured to live so here, as to obtain eternal happiness hereafter? 133

Honour, due to God, in the Lord's Supper.

Hast thou believed, that the Lord's Supper is generally necessary to salvation? 147

—That it was ordained by Christ? 149

Hast thou prepared thyself to a worthy receiving thereof, by examination of conscience, contrition, confession, satisfaction, purpose of amendment, resolutions of obedience, faith, charity, and prayer? 150

Hast thou at receiving behaved thyself irreverently, without devotion and spiritual affection? 156

Hast thou after receiving returned immediately to the affairs of this world, or to bad company, sports, and pleasures: and forgotten or neglected to keep the promises and good resolutions, which thou madest at the time of receiving? 158

Honour due to God's Name.

Hast thou prophaned or taken the name of God in vain? 160

—By blaspheming, or being the occasion of others blaspheming, by doing or speaking any evil thing of God? 160

—By swearing falsely or rashly? 161

—By perjury, or taking unlawful oaths? 163

—By swearing in common conversation or in slight and trivial matters? 165

—By cursing? 165

—By careless and inconsiderate vows? 167

Worship of God's Name.

Hast thou worshipped God, by adoration, confession, petition, for thy soul and body, and for pardon of thy sins; by deprecation of sin and punishment; by intercession, and praise, and thanksgiving upon all occasions? 168

Hast

Hast thou omitted the public prayers in the church, or thy family, or thy private devotions, when opportunity served ? 172

Hast thou always prayed, for what is lawful ; and with faith, humility, attention, and watchfulness ; with a sense of God's majesty and goodness, and of thy own wants ; with zeal, purity, and decent behaviour of thy body ? 178

Had thou prayed to God alone ; and condemned the practice of those, who pray to saints and angels, &c. ? 182

Hast thou believed, that God will hear thy prayers, when offered up to him according to his word ? 183

Hast thou permitted thy thoughts to wander in time of prayer, or

used any indecent or hypocritical gestures at such times ? 179

Repentance.

Hast thou repented of thy sins, because they offended a good and gracious God ? 185

Has thy repentance been pure, constant and persevering, and immediate ? 187

Hast thou called thyself to a daily account for thy sins, by self-examination ? 188

Hast thou set apart any particular or solemn times for this duty ? 188

Hast thou put off this duty, to the hazardous time of a death-bed ? 189

Hast thou neglected to revenge thy sins upon thyself, by fasting and other acts of mortification ? 190

Hast thou not believed, that any thing but the blood of CHRIST can satisfy for sin ? 185

Of our Duty to our NEIGHBOUR.

To the King.

Hast thou honoured the king ? 193

—By hiding his faults, and discouraging all vile and seditious discourse and writings against him ? 195

—By assisting him in the execution of justice ; by paying the legal taxes and tribute, and praying for him ? 195

—And by obeying all his godly commands ? 195

To and Of a Magistrate, &c.

Hast thou honoured, revered, and obeyed the civil magistrate ? 196

Hast thou faithfully discharged thy trust between the prince and the subject ? 197

Hast thou made it thy endeavour, to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well ? 197

Hast thou not been more intent upon thy own private interest, than advancing the common good ? 197

Hast thou endeavoured, to inform thyself of thy duty, in order to the doing of it, when thou hast been called to the office of constable, church-warden, or any other parish office ? 197

Hast thou considered, how to avoid and shun whatever might occasion strife and dissention ; and endeavoured, what in thee lies, to become useful and serviceable in thy place and station ? 197

To Pastors.

Hast thou honoured, loved, esteemed, respected, and revered the ministers of God's word and sacraments ? 198

Hast thou helped, according to thy ability, to maintain them ? 199

Y

Hast

Hast thou obeyed them, by practising their sound doctrine, and willingly submitting to their ecclesiastical discipline? 199

Hast thou prayed for them? 199

Hast thou derided or contemned them? 202

To Parents.

HAst thou respected and carried thyself civilly to thy parents? 206

Hast thou loved and obeyed them in all godly commands? 207, 208

Hast thou asked their advice in the case of thy marriage, or married privately or unadvisedly, contrary to their good advice? 209

Hast thou gone to law with them without manifest reason? 210

Hast thou neglected or refused to help them in time of need, when thou wert able? 211

To Children.

IF a mother: Hast thou neglected to suckle thy child, without just and necessary cause, that would have been prejudicial to thy health? 212

Hast thou been careful to bring thy children to baptism? 213

—To educate them, teach them their duty, and to give them good examples? 213, 216

Hast thou ever persuaded thy child to side with thee against its other parent? 217

Hast thou endeavoured to provide for the subsistence of thy children in some honest calling, agreeable to thy state and condition of life? 218

Hast thou endeavoured to keep them from idleness? 220

Hast thou disinherited thy child without a just cause? 221

To Brethren.

HAst thou affectionately loved thy brother born of the same flesh? 225

Hast thou loved all thy spiritual brethren, or fellow-christians? 226

Hast thou borne with their infirmities, and sympathized with their afflictions? 226

To a Husband.

HAst thou obeyed thy husband in all his lawful commands? 229

Art thou adorned with a meek and quiet spirit? 230

Hast thou been faithful to thy husband's bed and purse? 231

Hast thou dressed thyself modestly? 231

Hast thou loved him above all other creatures? 232

To a Wife.

HAst thou loved thy wife above all others? 235

Hast thou been faithful to thy marriage bed? 237

Hast thou maintained her according to thy ability? 237

Hast thou taught her (if ignorant of) the means of salvation? 238

Has thy behaviour to her been prudent, flexible, and obliging? 236

Hast thou prayed for her? 238

Hast thou married within the degrees forbidden, or for undue ends; as covetousness, lust, &c.? 239

To Friends.

HAst thou been unfaithful to thy friend? 240

Hast thou refused, or neglected, to assist him? 241

Hast thou prayed for his conversion? 242

Hast thou been constant to him? 242

Hast thou put him in mind, of his open transgressions of the law of God? 241

To Masters.

HAst thou obeyed thy master's lawful commands? 244

Hast thou faithfully discharged thy duty, in respect of thy time, and the care of thy master's goods, &c.? 244

Hast thou purloined or kept any part of thy master's goods without

out his consent, to thine own use? Or, **H**ast thou suffered others, to defraud thy master? 245

Hast thou meekly and patiently submitted, to thy master's just rebukes? 246

Hast thou avoided idleness, sloth, gaming, company-keeping; and whatever else tends, to the prejudice of thy master's business? 247

Hast thou repined or murmured against God, for placing thee in a state of servitude? 247

To a Servant.

If a master: Dost thou justly perform thy part of the contract or agreement with thy servant? 248

Hast thou admonished him, of his duty to God and man; and reproved him, for his offences? 248

Hast thou set him a good example? 250

Hast thou laid no more upon him, than he is able to do? 250

Hast thou encouraged him, for his well doing; and given him that which is equal and just? 251

Negative Justice.

Hast thou drawn any one to sin, either by command, council, enticement, or example? 254

Hast thou affrighted any one from godliness, by deriding him for the profession of it? 254

Hast thou endeavoured, to reform or bring those to repentance, whom thou hast drawn to sin? 255

Murder.

Hast thou openly or secretly contrived the death, or taken away the life of another? 255

Hast thou made women miscarry? 255

Hast thou enticed to, or accompanied others in such excess of eat-

ing or drinking, as to be the cause of their death? 255

Hast thou stirred men up to quarrelling and fighting; or been the cause or instrument, of such dissention between others, as hath ended in murder? 256

Hast thou, by false accusation, poison, or otherwise, taken away thy neighbour's life? 256

If a woman: **H**ast thou taken any thing, to prevent conception, or to cause miscarriage? or hast thou taken away the life of thy child, either before or after birth, to cover thy shame? 255

Duelling.

Hast thou given or accepted a challenge to fight? 256

Murder in thought and words.

Hast thou kept thy thoughts, from hatred, desire of revenge, and compassing the death of another? 256

Hast thou threatened the death of thy neighbour; or encouraged others by thy words, to procure or seek it? 257

Maiming, &c.

Hast thou wilfully and maliciously dismembered, maimed, or disfigured thy neighbour's person? 260

Hast thou made all the satisfaction in thy power, to those thou hast maimed? 260

Hast thou wounded, beaten or otherwise injured thy neighbour's body? 260

Self-Murder.

Hast thou ever harboured any thoughts, of taking away thine own life; or wilfully run thy life into danger; or desired any one to kill thee? 263

If a prisoner under condemnation: **H**ast thou wished or endeavoured, to prevent thy public execution, by privately destroying thyself? 267

Y-2 Adultery.

Adultery.

HAST thou coveted thy neighbour's wife, or enticed her to defile her marriage-bed? 268

Theft.

HAST thou taken pleasure, in damaging or destroying thy neighbour's goods? 269

HAST thou looked upon them, with a covetous eye? 270

HAST thou taken them from him, by violence or fraud? 270

HAST thou coveted thy neighbour's servant, or used any act to seduce him from his master's service? 270

HAST thou endeavoured to deprive or dispossess thy neighbour of any employment, business, or habitation; to gain any advantage to thyself, or to satisfy thy revenge upon the ruin of thy neighbour? 270

HAST thou paid thy just debts? 270

HADST thou no intention to pay, at the time of borrowing? 271

HAST thou borrowed upon bad securities? 271

HAST thou put off thy payments when due, and obliged thy creditors to force thee by law? 271

HAST thou endeavoured to defraud them, by protection or any other frauds? 272

HAST thou discharged those bonds, thou hast given for others? 272

HAST thou paid, what thou promisedst? 273

Stealing.

HAST thou robbed on the highways; stolen cattle, poultry, &c. broken into houses, broken open locks, &c. or privately pilfered any thing? 273

Breach of Trust.

HAST thou been an arbitrator in a cause, and given judgment against thy conscience? 275

HAST thou been an executor to a will, and neglected or falsified thy trust? 275

HAST thou been a guardian to children, &c. and robbed or permitted others to injure them? 275

HAST thou been a factor, and endeavoured to impose upon, or refused to give a just account to those that employed thee? 275

HAST thou been an assignee, and concealed or delayed to distribute to every one his just part of the debtor's effects? 275

HAST thou been the keeper of a pledge, and refused to restore it upon lawful terms? 275

HAST thou been a public assessor for taxes of any sort, and hast thou conscientiously without favour or affection assessed every one according to his due? 275

HAST thou been a parish officer; and taken care, not to embezzle the money committed to thy trust in feastings, &c. but to relieve the poor, according to the allowance of the parish? 275

HAST thou been a trustee for the poor, in any charitable gifts? if so, a breach of thy trust is sacrilege. 275

Traffic or Bargaining.

HAST thou contrived, to deceive the buyer or seller, by concealing the faults of thy goods? 277

HAST thou endeavoured, to impose upon any one's ignorance? 277

—Or, to take advantage of their necessities? 278

—Or, by unjust weights or measures? 278

—Or, by uttering bad money? 278

IF thou hast sinned, in any of these particulars; Hast thou endeavoured, to make restitution? 281

Credit or Reputation.

HAST thou endeavoured, to ruin thy neighbour's credit, by false reports? 284

—By censoriousness? 284

—By false witness? 289

—By

- By public slanders ? 289
- By whispering ? 290
- By encouraging eaves droppers, tale bearers, and slanderers ? 290
- By publishing hearsays which thou canst not prove to be true ? 285

- By upbraiding him with thy kindnesses ?
- By reproaching him with his faults repented of ?
- By scoffing and despising thy neighbour, for infirmities, deformities, or weaknesses; and for calamities and sins ? 293
- By encouraging others so to do ? 293

- Hast thou endeavoured, to restore that good name, which thou hast blasted ? 294
- Hast thou any malicious desire, against thy neighbour; or taken any pleasure, in his misfortunes ? 295

Positive Justice.

- H**Ast thou spoken truth to all men ? 295
- Hast thou promised nothing out of thy power ? 295
- Hast thou avoided flattery ? 296
- Hast thou been guilty of lying or equivocation, either for profit or pleasure ? 297
- Hast thou been courteous and meek to all men ? 299
- Hast thou refrained brawling ? 299
- Hast thou shewn due respect to men of extraordinary gifts ? 300

Envy and Detraction.

- H**Ast thou envied, or endeavoured to detract from, or lessen, thy neighbour's qualifications ? 300, 301
- Hast thou secretly wished death or hurt to thy neighbour ? 301
- Hast thou shewn due respect, to men of rank and quality, to the rich, to those in want, and to the poor ? 301

Gratitude.

HAst thou been grateful to thy benefactors ? 302

Charity, or Love to our NEIGHBOUR.

HAst thou been affectionately desirous, of the salvation of all men ? 306

Hast thou wished them all health and welfare ? 306

Hast thou contemned, upbraided or reproached any, for natural blemishes ? 306

Hast thou grudged or repined at thy neighbour's good ? 306

Hast thou vilified or disdained thy neighbour ? 307

Hast thou judged rashly of his words and actions ? 307

Hast thou spoken him fair, and injured him privately ? 308

Hast thou sought, to advance thine own interest by the ruin of thy neighbour ? 307

Hast thou loved or forgiven those thine enemies, who have offended thee ? 308

Hast thou endeavoured, to comfort and refresh thy sorrowful neighbour ? 311

Hast thou endeavoured, to support him in despair; and to reclaim him from his evil course of life ? 312

Hast thou, according to thy ability, given meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, and lodging to the stranger ? 312

Hast thou visited the sick, and those in prison ? 313, 314

When obliged; Hast thou prosecuted an offender without rage or malice ? 315

Hast thou never permitted thy rich neighbour, to suffer loss, when in thy power to prevent it ? 316

Hast thou given alms according to thy ability, and cheerfully, seasonably, and prudently ? 316

Hast thou endeavoured to get riches by unjust means, to give to the poor; or given them the substance due to thy creditors? 322

**CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR'S
Credit or Reputation.**

HAst thou been ready to vindicate the innocence of thy neighbour, when falsely accused? 328

Hast thou grounded thy dislike of thy neighbour upon bare suspicions and hear-say? 328

Hast thou fancied the worst designs, and put the worst interpretation upon his words and actions? 328

Hast thou dwelt upon an injury received, and hearkened to idle tales? 328

Hast thou been ready, to accept of thy neighbour's proposals of reconciliation? 328

Hast thou been ready, to do all that for thy neighbour, which (were his case thine, and thine his) thou mightest, in reason and good conscience, expect and be glad to have done to thyself? 329

Hast thou done good to thy neighbour, without indirectly seeking thine own profit or pleasure? 330

Hast thou treated thy superiors with chearful submission? 330

—Thy benefactors with gratitude? 330

—Thine equals with good-nature,

and readiness to do all offices of kindness? 330

—Thine inferiors with gentleness, moderation, and charity? 331

Hast thou taken all opportunities, to do them all the good in thy power? 331

Hast thou set aside all self-love, and striven to please thy neighbour, for his good to edification? 331

Hast thou prayed to God, to bless thee with a charitable, meek, and peaceable temper? 331

Peace-making.

HAst thou reported any thing false of thy neighbour? 331

—Hast thou listened, to what thy neighbour said to another, either through curiosity, malice or envy; to spread abroad what thou so heardest, to his prejudice; or to create a dispute, variance, or contention? 331

Hast thou lived a peaceable or quiet life; never taking part in other men's quarrels, otherwise than to appease them? 331

Going to Law.

HAst thou gone to law, or sued thy neighbour, for trifles; or for some unguarded or injurious words, which no way affect thy reputation, and he is willing to revoke? 334

Hast thou been sure, that thou wentest to law, only to recover or maintain thy just right? 335

Hast thou sued thy neighbour, out of revenge? 335

Of our Duty towards OURSELVES.

Sobriety.

HAst thou sought after a sound and firm mind? 336, &c.

Hast thou striven, to govern and direct thy inferior appetites, to good and virtuous purposes? 337

Hast thou searched, and regulated both thy soul and body, in thy personal and private capacity? 339

Hast thou bent thy thoughts, to what is good? 339

Hast

Hast thou kept thy heart, in a good disposition to virtue? 339

Hast thou made religion thy greatest care? 339

Hast thou avoided idleness and bad company? 339

Hast thou watched over, and checked the first motions to evil? 340

Hast thou always lived, under a constant sense of God's presence and inspection? 341

Humility.

Hast thou abhorred all sawning expressions and behaviour, that cover an hypocritical and proud heart? 341

Hast thou sincerely humbled thyself before God and man, in a deep sense of thine own corruption and subordination? 341

Hast thou obeyed the civil magistrate willingly, in all things just and lawful? 341

Hast thou despised their persons, or exposed their weakness, or insulted over their infirmities? 341

Hast thou been willing and desirous, to be instructed by thy superiors in natural abilities? 341

Hast thou envied them or repined at the advantages God has given them above thyself? 341

Hast thou grieved at, or envied others, for their advancement on account of their religious improvements? 341

Hast thou been civil, affable, courteous, and modest, to and among thine equals? 342

Hast thou repined or murmured at seeing them preferred before thee? 342

Hast thou been willing, for peace sake, to submit to things indifferent? 342

Hast thou assumed no more authority, over thine inferiors, than is consistent with thy station, and necessary to preserve the re-

gularity and good order of the world? 342

Hast thou been willing, to assist them in their necessities, and to make their condition as supportable and easy as may be? 342

Hast thou thought thyself too great to instruct, or to procure the instruction of those, who are poor and ignorant? 342

Hast thou been sensible of thine own many infirmities and sins? 342

Hast thou striven, to influence men towards religion, rather by meekness, than by power? 343

Hast thou affected the applause of men, by outward show of piety? 343

Hast thou judged or despised those, who differ from thee in religion? 343

Hast thou taken care, to give no offence to the enemies of thy holy religion? 343

Hast thou imposed needless difficulties, on those under thy power? 343

Hast thou used great gentleness to those, who have offended thee? 344

Self-conceit.

Hast thou been puffed up above measure, or on any account whatever? 344

Hast thou striven to be wise above what is revealed in God's word? 344

Hast thou ventured, to publish thine own inventions in matters of pure revelation? 345

Hast thou been positive, in thine opinion concerning them? 345

Hast thou ascribed all thy knowledge to the blessing of God? 345

Hast thou been impatient of opposition? 346

Hast thou disdained counsel? 346

Hast thou scorned instruction and rebuke, or taken affront at those who yielded not to thy opinion ?

346

Pride.

HAst thou presumed so much on thyself, as to set up for a director, pattern, or lawgiver, to every body else ?

347

Hast thou valued thyself, on the goods of nature ; or because thou art more beautiful, strong, witty, &c. than others ?

352

—Or, on the goods of fortune : because thou art more wealthy, honourable, &c. ?

353

—Or, on the goods of grace ; because God hath blessed thee with greater gifts or virtues, than others ?

353

Vain-glory.

HAst thou been resolved, to court the praise of men at all adventures, by committing any sin in fashion ?

353

Hast thou been too much exalted in thine heart, at the just praises of thy virtues ?

354

Meekness.

HAst thou been calm, quiet, and chearful, under God's appointments ; and absolutely resigned to his providence ?

355

Hast thou been angry without a cause ?

355

Hast thou judged, by appearances only ?

355

Hast thou given way to suspicions, not supported by evidence ?

355

Hast thou put the best construction on all words and actions ?

355

Hast thou checked all resentment, until thou hast duly considered the grounds of it ?

355

Hast thou resented, higher, than the merit of the offence given ?

355

Hast thou rendered railing for railing ?

355

Hast thou used rough methods, to right thyself from inconsiderable injuries ?

355

Hast thou tried argument before punishment, and conference before law ?

355

Hast thou used private admonition before thou punishedst thy neighbour openly ?

355

Hast thou sought justice, and punished without hatred ; and merely with a view, to reach those ends, which are lawful and commendable ?

355

Hast thou been always ready, to be reconciled upon just and equitable conditions ?

355

Hast thou been ready, to help and pray for thy greatest enemies ?

355

Hast thou been full of thine own abilities, and overbearing in company ?

356

Hast thou behaved with civility to all men, in their proper stations ?

356

Consideration.

HAst thou first considered thy words and actions well, before thou fixedst thy resolutions ?

358

Hast thou presumed on thine own works and merit, or on a bare historical faith in Christ for salvation ?

358

Hast thou presumed, to think thyself elected or decreed to salvation, without strict obedience to, and faith in the gospel of Christ ?

359

Hast thou been careless or negligent, in thy pursuit of eternal life ?

359

Hast thou lived securely, in a sinful state ?

359

Hast thou considered the consequences of thine actions, both before and after thou didst them ?

360

—Whether they be hurtful to thyself or thy neighbour ?

360

—Or,

—Or, whether they be according to the rules of the gospel? 361
Hast thou ever laid down to sleep, before thou hast considered thine own estate, repented of thy sins, and resolved to lead a new life? 361

Contentedness.

Hast thou been content with that state and circumstance of life, in which God's providence has placed thee? 362

Hast thou murmured or repined, at the afflictions thou hast met with? 362

Hast thou received God's corrections with submission and praise? 362

Hast thou any ambition, to strive after unlawful dominion or power, large possessions, and high living? 363

Hast thou distrusted the promises of God? 363

Hast thou judged of God's love or hatred to any one by outward circumstances? 364

Hast thou been so covetous, as to increase thy substance by fraud and deceit? 365

—Or, by engaging in more affairs, than thou couldst manage without anxiety, discontent, and neglect of religious duties? 366

Hast thou endeavoured the best thou couldst, and left the event to God? 366

Hast thou grieved immoderately, at the loss of husband, wife, child, parent, friend, &c.? 412

Watchfulness.

Hast thou been always mindful, to resist the first beginnings of evil, and the approaches of the spiritual enemy? 372

Hast thou striven, to work out thy salvation with fear and trembling? 373

Industry.

Hast thou employed thy reason, understanding and memory, to promote the glory of God, thy neighbour's good, and thine own salvation? 373

Hast thou been idle, slothful, intemperate, brutish, or profane? 373

Hast thou preferred thy reason to God's revelation? 373

—Or, loaded thy memory with wicked thoughts, or romances and idle tales? 373

Hast thou done thy duty, in that state of life, wherein God has placed thee? 373

Hast thou been ready, to give good advice, to instruct the ignorant, and to resolve the scruples of those who apply to thee? 373

Hast thou taken care, to bring thy children up to some honest employ, and at all times to keep them out of idleness? 374

Art thou a labourer, or a servant; and dost loiter away thy time, for which thou dost receive wages? 374

Hast thou neglected thy household affairs, thy family, children, or employment, (without which thou canst not live according to thy station) under a pretence of more pure religion? 375

Hast thou endeavoured to improve all sorts of piety and virtue, by fixing thy mind upon heaven, as thy end; by endeavouring to grow in grace; taking every opportunity of doing good, both to the souls and bodies of thy neighbours; keeping guard on thy passions; and being ready, to obey the checks of conscience? 376

Hast thou been drawn from thy duty by temptation? 377

Hast thou laid thy sins, to the charge of God or of the devil? 377

Haft thou begged God's grace to strengthen thee, and resisted the devil ? 378

Chastity or Purity.

HAFT thou committed adultery, or fornication, or incest ? 378

Haft thou been careful, to abstain from all unnatural and unlawful pleasures of sense, in thyself and others ; and hast thou been moderate, in the use of such, as are lawful and allowed by the christian religion ? 378

Haft thou delighted in, or used wanton or lascivious words, looks or gestures, lewd company, indecent balls or revellings ? 382

Haft thou read dishonest books, or unchaste songs ; or looked on immodest pictures ? 384

Haft thou taken any carnal pleasure with thy hands, or exposed any part of thy body to excite others to lust ? 380

Or, hast thou endeavoured to excite lust, by eating or drinking any thing for that end ? 382

Haft thou been careful, to stifle and suppress all beginnings of those sins in thy thoughts, and to apply thy mind to good objects ? 382

Haft thou made use of words of a double meaning, to create unchaste thoughts, in others ? 382

Haft thou repeated, what thou hast heard in such a manner, as to injure christian modesty ? 382

Haft thou carefully avoided all outward temptations to this sin ? 383

Haft thou prayed to God frequently, to preserve thee from this sin ; knowing, that the perfection and happiness of a reasonable creature does not consist in sensual enjoyments, but in those which are spiritual ? 384

Temperance.

HAFT thou never eaten nor drank beyond what God and nature has intended for the being and well-being of thy life ? 385

Haft thou eaten or drank, only to gratify thy taste, or to excite lust ? 386

Haft thou lived at thy table, above thine ability ; or indulged thyself, in niceties and luxury ? 387

Haft thou avoided, whatever thou findest prejudicial to thy health ; or likely to make thy body heavy, and incapable of performing thy duty ? 387

Haft thou squandered away thine own, or thy creditors substance, in banqueting, feasting, drunkenness, and company-keeping ? 387

Haft thou delighted in drunken companions ? 390

Time.

HOW hast thou employed thy time ? 399

Haft thou applied all the time thou couldst reserve from the necessities of nature, to the glory of God, and to thine own and thy neighbour's good ? 400

Haft thou assigned a proper season, to all thy actions ; and so much time only, as may be necessary for them ? 400

Sleep.

HAFT thou delighted too much in thy bed ; or slept, when thou wert well refreshed, and oughtest to rise to thy work or devotions ? 401

Haft thou, when thou laidst thyself down to rest, recommended thy soul to God ; and repented of thy sins past ? 401

Haft thou, when thou didst rise up from sleep, thanked God for thy comfortable refreshment, and his protection, and preservation of thee ? 401

Haft thou been slothful ? 401

Recreations.

Recreations.

HAst thou set thine affections too much upon play? 402
 Hast thou gamed thyself into a passion? 402
 Hast thou gamed too long, or come too often to thy recreations? 402
 Hast thou preferred thy pastimes to thy business, to the detriment thereof? 402
 Hast thou made a trade of gaming? 402
 Hast thou lyed, cheated, deceived, sworn or quarrelled, at thy recreations? 402
 Hast thou played for more money, than thou wert able to lose without discomposure of temper, or hurt to thy family or estate? 402
 Have thy recreations been short, used for refreshment only, and always yielding to thy necessary duties? 403

Apparel.

HAst thou been modest in thy apparel? 405
 Hast thou laid more out in apparel, than thy circumstances can allow? 406
 Hast thou dressed, with a view to tempt others to sin, either in the same excess, or in the lusts of the flesh? 406
 Hast thou followed the fashions, and dressed thyself only to set off thy beauty, or to deceive the world into a false opinion of thy greatness and honour? 406
 Hast thou taken up so much time, in dressing thyself, or shewing thyself to company, or in preparing the superfluous clothes, as to neglect the care of thy soul? 406
 Hast thou regarded the fashions of dress so, as to prejudice thy health thereby? 407

Hast thou been so covetous, as to deny thyself convenient apparel, suitable to thy station and circumstances? 409

Hast thou been satisfied with mean and plain apparel, when it was not in thy power to get better with a good conscience? 408, 409

Fortitude or Patience.

HAst thou been always calm and composed, and steady in thy duty to God under afflictions, or in delay of thy expectations? 410

Hast thou permitted reason and grace, to guide thee in all thy ways? 410

Hast thou concluded, that God is angry with thee, when thou hast fallen into divers temptations and afflictions? 411

Hast thou retired, changed the discourse, or remained silent, when anger began to boil? 414

Hast thou despised little trifles of discontent? 414

Self-denial.

Wouldst thou rather lose the whole world, and life itself, than offend God? 415

Hast thou denied thy innocent appetites, when they hindered the practice of mortification? 415

Zeal.

HAst thou done all in thy power, to keep a conscience void of offence? 416

Hast thou endeavoured, by a good example, admonition, and authority, to promote virtue and to suppress vice? 416

Hast thou carefully distinguished, between the glory of God, and satisfying thine own or another's passion or inclination? 416

Hast thou persecuted for religion with a furious spirit? 416

Hast

Hast thou been always persuaded, that what you contended for was certainly and considerably good; and what you opposed was certainly and considerably bad?	416	Has thy zeal caused any one, to fall or separate from, or to keep out of, the CHRISTIAN church?	417
Hast thou been more concerned, for the externals of religion, than for solid and real goodness?	417	Hast thou persecuted without meekness and charity?	417
Hast thou been guilty of any lye, equivocation, fraud, violence, or oppression, &c. to bring about (as thou supposedst) a good end?	417	Hast thou, in religious disputes, avoided all reproachful and bitter reflections, all false reasonings, and misapplication of scripture?	417
		Art thou stedfast in thy holy religion, and charitable to those, who dissent from thee?	

The Prayer for a *sincere Repentance*,
after *Self-Examination*.

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of my heart, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit; that I may thoroughly repent of all my sins; that I may seek for pardon and forgiveness, through the merits of Christ; and may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, through the same Christ Jesus, my Lord and Saviour! *Amen.*

PRAYERS for the HOLY COMMUNION.*

*A Prayer, for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper ;
to be said, immediately after Sermon.*

I Know, O Lord, that the benefit is great ; if, with a true penitent heart, and lively faith, I do receive this holy sacrament ; for then I spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood ; then I dwell in Christ, and Christ in me ; then I am one with Christ, and Christ with me : Grant therefore, good Lord, that I (and every one of us, now approaching thereto) may repent us truly of our sins past, having a lively and stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour ; that we may amend our lives, and be in perfect charity with all men ; and so become meet partakers of those holy mysteries ! *Amen.*

A Prayer, when we offer up our Alms.

O Merciful Lord, by whose goodness and providence I am both willing and enabled, to relieve the necessities of my poor brethren ! I beseech thee, to accept of this testimony of my love and gratitude ; and to make me truly thankful, for all those opportunities, thou givest me of doing good in the name of that perfect pattern of all goodness, thy Son Jesus Christ, my only Saviour ! *Amen.*

*A Prayer, immediately after the Bread and Wine are
consecrated.*

GRACIOUS Lord, who so lovedst the world, that thou gavest thine only-begotten Son, to humble himself to the death of the cross, that I might be redeemed from a state of sin and misery ; who (to the end, that all men should always remember his exceeding great love in dying for us, and the innumerable benefits, which by his precious blood-shedding he has obtained to us) did institute and ordain such holy mysteries, as pledges of his
love,

* *The Reader, that would be satisfied concerning the Nature, Design and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is referred to Sunday VI. Sect. I, II, III, and IV, in this book.*

love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort : I humbly implore, that the power of it may strengthen my weakness against all temptations ; that the wisdom of it may cure my ignorance ; and that the purity of this oblation, of himself once offered, may sanctify me throughout, in body and soul : and this I beg, for the all sufficient merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour ! *Amen.*

A Prayer, before receiving the consecrated Bread.

GRANT me, I beseech thee, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood ; that my sinful body may be made clean by his body, and my soul washed through his most precious blood ; and that I may evermore dwell in him, and he in me ! *Amen.*

As the Priest comes to give you the Bread, say,

LET thy body, I beseech thee, O Lord Jesu Christ, which was given for me, preserve my body and soul unto everlasting life : and grant, that I may take and eat this, in remembrance, that thou hast died for me ; and that I may feed on thee in my heart, by faith with thanksgiving. *Amen.*

As the Minister comes to give you the Cup, say,

LET thy blood, I beseech thee, O Lord Jesu Christ, which was shed for me, preserve my body and soul unto everlasting life ; and grant, that I may drink this, in remembrance, that thy blood was shed for me ; and that I may be thankful ! *Amen.*

After receiving the consecrated Bread and Wine, say,

GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ! For, seeing now (O gracious Lord !) that I, who am but dust and ashes, have been refreshed with the body and blood of thy dear Son ; I will magnify thy holy name ; and as long, as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God. O let not these feet, which have approached thine altar, ever more walk in the ways of the wicked : let not these hands, which have

have received the bread and the cup which came down from heaven, be ever defiled with injustice, or any kind of impiety ; but grant, that they may evermore be washed in innocency : let these eyes be chaste, which, have now beheld these holy mysteries ; let that mouth be clean, which has spiritually received the body and blood of Christ ; and let that soul be raised above this world, which has been now refreshed with this spiritual food ; through the same thy Son, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer !
Amen.

A Prayer, when retired from the Lord's Table.

O Lord, I give thee most humble and hearty thanks, that thou hast been pleased to admit me now to renew my baptismal covenant with thee, in this holy sacrament ; and that thou hast vouchsafed, to feed me with the spiritual nourishment of the body and blood of thy Son, Jesus Christ ; not for any merits of my own, but for the sake of thy infinite goodness and mercy towards sinful man. Grant therefore, I beseech thee, that this holy sacrament may never turn to my judgment and condemnation ; but that it may be health to my soul, the means of its recovery from all weaknesses and infirmities ; safety and defence, against all the attacks of my spiritual enemies ; vigour and strength, to all my holy purposes and resolutions ; comfort and support, under all the afflictions and calamities of life ; assistance and direction, under all difficulties and doubts ; courage and constancy, under all dangers and persecutions, especially in time of sickness, and at the hour of death ; and finally, that it may procure for me, pardon and forgiveness in this life, mercy and favour at the day of judgment, and a never-fading crown of glory in thy heavenly kingdom ; through Jesus Christ, my Redeemer ! *Amen.*

PRAYERS to be used by SICK PERSONS. *

A Prayer, in Sicknefs.

O God, whose never-failing providence ordereth all things both in heaven and earth ; behold me, thy poor servant, upon whom thou hast been pleased to lay thine afflicting hand : sanctify, I beseech thee, this thy fatherly correction to me : and grant, that I may receive it with all the patience and submission, becoming a child of God ; neither murmuring, nor repining, under any dispensations of thy providence ; but looking on all my afflictions, as the means of weaning me from the world, bringing me nearer to thyself, and purging away all that dross and defilement, which my soul has contracted in this sinful world. O merciful Father, let not my sins provoke thee, to turn away thy face from me, while I look unto thee in this time of my trouble : but for the merits and intercession of thy beloved Son, pardon all my sins ; and say unto my soul, ‘ I am thy salvation !’ Oh ! give me strength, resolution, and patience, to bear all my pain, weaknesses and infirmities ; strengthen my faith, enlarge my hopes, encrease my charity, and perfect my repentance, that I may be delivered from the fear of death : make thou my bed in my sickness ; and lay not more upon me, than thou wilt enable me to bear : give a blessing to the means, which shall be used for my recovery ; and if it be thy good pleasure, restore me to my former health, that I may lead the rest of my life in thy fear and to thy glory. But, if thou hast determined, that this sickness shall be unto death ; grant, O merciful Father, that the more the outward man decayeth, so much the more I may find the inner man strengthened and renewed with thy grace and Holy Spirit ; and give me grace, so to take this thy visitation, that, after this painful life is ended, I may dwell with thee in life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my dear and only Saviour ! *Amen.*

A Prayer,

* *The Reader, who would understand, how to support himself under, and improve such Sicknefs, as the Lord shall please to visit him with, is referred to Sunday VII. Sect. 6. and Sunday XVII.*

A Prayer, on sending for the Physician.

ALMIGHTY God, as thou hast ordained the physician for the benefit of those, who languish under any bodily distemper ; I have resolved to try his skill, in order to the same : yet my chief hope is in thee. O be thou my help ; for, without thee, vain is the help of man, and all his skill. Therefore, I beseech thee, direct thy servant, to what may be proper for me ; and let thy blessing accompany his prescriptions, and give success thereto. For, though the most efficacious methods of cure be nothing of themselves ; yet, if thou speak the word, thy servant shall be healed : thou art the great physician, who alone canst effectually remove all my maladies : all other helps are but instruments in thy hands, which work according to thy good pleasure. Be thou with me therefore, to guide and assist, to bless and prosper them, to thine own glory, and to the welfare of me, thine unworthy servant ; who here most humbly sue to thee for pity, through Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour ! *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used on taking Physic.

GIVE thy blessing, O Lord, to the means, now used for my recovery ; for without thee, all our endeavours are but vain : and (if it be thy blessed will) make them so effectual for that end, that I may live to promote thy glory, and to make a better preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour ! *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used on want of Sleep.

ALMIGHTY God, I seek sleep, to ease my pains, and to recruit my spirits, but I find it not : consider my weariness, which calls aloud for rest ; and my weakness, which greatly needs refreshment ; and let my wearied eyes at length lay hold thereof. O grant me that comfort ; that, whilst thou keepest me awake, I may be able to commune with mine own heart, and search out my spirit : let me remember thee on my bed ; and meditate on thee in the night-watches ; and let the consideration of thy tender mercies be my comfort, until thy goodness
see

see fit to give sleep to mine eyes, and refreshment to my sorrows, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour! *Amen.*

A Prayer, to be used under bodily Pain.

ALMIGHTY God, who art a present help in time of trouble; I most earnestly beseech thee, if it be thy blessed will, to ease my pain, and comfort me in this time of my affliction. I acknowledge the justice of thy dealings towards me; and that I have deserved much greater pains than I now endure: but grant me patience, O Lord! that with a meek and quiet submission to thy will, I may wait, until thou see fit to deliver me from my distress: and, whatever evils and sorrows I may feel in my body, let me still love thee; and believe thee to be a kind and merciful Father, even whilst thou art smiting and correcting me for my transgressions. To this end, O Lord, be pleased in thy great mercy, to strengthen and support me; and lay no more upon me, than thou wilt enable me to bear, by the assistance of thy Holy Spirit; and sanctify this affliction to me, that it may produce in me the fruits of a true and lively faith, and of a sincere repentance of all my sins: all which I beg, at the throne of thy mercy, through the merits and in the name of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my Saviour! *Amen.*

A Prayer, for a sick Child.

ALMIGHTY God and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death; I fly unto thee for succour, in behalf of this child, here lying under thy hand, in great weakness of body. Look graciously upon it, O Lord; ease it, I beseech thee, of its pains; and pity it in extremity. O Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst raise it up, and grant it a longer continuance in this life: O raise it up again, if it may please thee; that it may grow in years and stature, in wisdom and thy fear; and thereby become a comfort to its parents, and glorify thee. Thou, O God, knowest best, what is fit for it and me; and wilt do, what is best for both: to thee, therefore, I humbly resign its life; beseeching thee, to have mercy on us. But, whether it live or die, let it be

be thine : and either preserve it, to be thy true and faithful servant here on earth ; or take it into those heavenly habitations, where the souls of those, who sleep in the Lord Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity. Grant this, O Lord, for thy mercies sake, in the same thy Son my Lord ; who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end ! *Amen.*

A Prayer, against the Fear of Death.

MOST gracious God, since I am hastening on to the end of my life ; let all my sins be done away by thy mercy, and my faith and repentance through the merits of Christ. Take from me all guilt, remove all fear, and give me patience, during the rest of my life ; that I may always stand ready, to give a good account of my life unto thee ; that I may fight the good fight of faith, with constancy and perseverance, and finish my course with joy ; and that I may never sleep in sin, nor lie down in sorrow and misery. Since the sentence of death is past upon me, strip my soul of all fleshly affections, before it leave my body ; and dispose it, to be of like mind and disposition, with the holy angels and beatified spirits : let me not forget, that this is like to be the last trial, which thou wilt afford me, of renouncing my own will, and resigning myself to thine, and of shewing forth devotion of spirit, and all holy obedience, and patience, and faith, and humble confidence in thee ; make me therefore watch for all opportunities of exercising the same, and do them diligently, as my last labour for immortality, and for securing thy everlasting mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who died for me and all mankind ! *Amen.*

A Prayer, for Assistance at the hour of Death.

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, my only help in time of need ! look graciously upon me, O Lord ; and the more the outward man decayeth, strengthen me (I beseech thee) so much the more continually, with thy grace and Holy spirit, in the inner man. Give me unfeigned repentance for all the errors of my life past, and stedfast faith in thy Son Jesus ; that my sins may be done away by thy mercy, and my pardon sealed in
heaven,

524 *Advice to those, who have been sick.*

heaven, before I go hence and be no more seen. There is no word impossible with thee, O Lord! and, if thou wilt, thou canst even yet raise me up, and grant me a longer continuance in this life: yet, as (in all appearance) the time of my departure draweth near, so fit and prepare me, I beseech thee, against the hour of death: that, after my departure hence in peace and in thy favour, my soul may be received into thine everlasting kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thine only Son, my Lord and Saviour! *Amen.*

A serious Admonition to those, who are recovered from Sickness.

Nothing proves more fatal to that due preparation we ought to make for another life, than our unhappy mistake of the nature and end of this. We are brought into the world, children, ignorant and impotent; we grow up, in vanity and folly: and, when we come to be men, we are but very little more prudent and considerate: thus our thoughts and our desires are wholly set upon this world: we vainly project an establishment in it; nor look we any farther, than the little interests and employment thereof engage us. It is not to be doubted, that, to place our affections so much upon this world, does (above all things) indispose us to think of the other. But as our lives are uncertain, and we cannot be long here; we ought to make all the haste we can, before it be too late, to examine the state of our souls, and to provide for futurity. All the little objects we now pursue; and for which, our ease, our conscience, nay, our very religion itself, is sacrificed by us; are but vanities and trifles; neither worthy in themselves, nor satisfying in their enjoyment. The only thing, which can secure you against sin, and endear virtue and religion to your practice, will be; to raise your affections above this world, by seriously considering the excellence and certainty of another life; and how vain and transient, indeed how troublesome and unsatisfying, are the highest felicities of this.

¶ **S**EEING then, that Almighty God has been pleased to recover you from your late sickness, and to vouchsafe you a longer continuance in this world; it is your indispensable duty, immediately to reflect upon the condition

condition you have been in ; (which you could not be so well able to do, under the disorders and pains of a sick bed) and to endeavour to confirm the good dispositions, which the sight of the grave has raised and improved ; but which a new prospect of life will be apt to deface again, unless they be renewed upon the mind by your serious consideration. ¶ To reap the benefits which God designed in visiting us ; we are to consider *sickness*, not so much in the natural, as in a religious sense ; we are to consider it, and the pains and agonies we felt, as a nearer view of death, and a sensible proof of the frailty of our nature. The pains and agonies which we feel in sickness, are not to be considered, barely as an uneasiness to the body ; but more especially, as a lesson to the soul ; to make it less fond of continuing in this painful state, and more willing to leave this world, when it shall please God to appoint it. We should not consider the continuance of sickness, as so much time lost from the business and pleasures of this life ; but rather, as a check given by God to our worldly pursuits, to make way for thoughts and considerations of a more heavenly nature. ¶ It is the great unhappiness, of our nature ; that, when calamities fall upon us, we are uneasy and dissatisfied ; and our whole business and care is, to remove them ; not considering whence they come. But, in *sickness*, you must have your eye chiefly upon God, whose providence orders all the affairs of this world ; else you will never make a right judgment, nor a right use, of it. As God can do nothing, but for good and wise ends ; so, when he is pleased to visit us with sickness, the only or chief end he aims at, cannot be, to punish the body ; this life not being the proper season, for the punishment of sin : and to imagine, that God grieves and afflicts his creatures for no other purpose, but because it is in his power to do it ; is by no means consistent with the divine goodness. God himself assures us, *That he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men* : if then he send sickness unwillingly, this shews, that he would not send it at all, if it were not to be the ordinary means, of conveying good to the soul ; a proof that the thoughts of a sick bed are not to be laid aside, as soon as we are restored to our health and strength. ¶ HAVING duly considered the true end of God's visit-

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ing mankind in general, look into your former life : you will (perhaps) find, that, until you were visited, you had been careless and lukewarm in matters of religion, and wanted to be awakened into a sense of your duty : that you encouraged yourself in sin, by setting death and a future state far from you ; and therefore stood in need, of a nearer view and apprehension of them : that you had long forgotten God, and had need to be thus brought to a sense of his power and justice : that ease and health had betrayed you into a fondness for the delights and interests of this world ; and therefore it was become necessary, that God should interpose, and shew you the folly of setting your heart on this life, by reminding you of the uncertainty of it. Such reflections as these, upon the follies and failings of your former state, will shew you the goodness and mercy of God, in visiting you with sickness ; and the sense of this goodness of God will convince you, that, what you have felt, were the chastisements of a tender Father ; to him therefore listen and submit, with great humility and thankfulness, (as did the royal Psalmist, on a like occasion) saying ; *I know, O Lord, that thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled ; and it is good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.*

¶ HAVING thus considered, what the state of your soul was before sickness ; and having made yourself sensible, of the goodness of God in sending it ; consider seriously, whether (before you were visited) you had not thought too little of another life ; and whether death, if it had then come, would not have been a very great surprize to you : consider also, that, if it had not pleased God to spare you, you had been doomed (ere this) to eternal destruction. The sense of this should oblige you, to exert all the powers of the body and soul, in praising and blessing God for his goodness ; and should also warn you, never to run such a desperate hazard for the future. ¶ HAVING seriously reflected on the divine goodness, first in visiting you with sickness, and then in delivering you from death ; you must remember what were your own thoughts and resolutions, whilst you lay upon your sick-bed. You then thought it a great folly, that you had let so much of your time pass away, with so little preparation for the next life ; and wished then, over and over, that heaven and its
happiness

happiness had been your chief care: since these were then undoubtedly your real thoughts, your sincere wishes and resolutions, when on your sick bed; you have now the greatest reason, to thank God for vouchsafing you an opportunity of making amends for these your former neglects, by a future diligence in the work of your salvation. As you then could gladly have been content, to have given all the world (had it been yours) for a little time to consider better, and to make your peace with God; and, as a longer time is now granted you, you are not to forget, how valuable you once thought it: but to improve it to the ends, for which you then so earnestly wished and desired it: as you then made repeated resolutions, that (if God would prolong your life) you would live to serve him faithfully the remainder of your life; seeing God has now graciously granted what you then desired, he now expects, that you perform what you then promised. Every promise and resolution you made in sickness, was in the nature of a solemn vow unto God; for, had you died, none but God could have judged of the sincerity of your intention: but now you are recovered, if you forget your vow, this will be a plain and open declaration, that your resolutions were only produced by the fear of death; and that you have profited nothing, by the chastisements of your heavenly Father. But I hope, your late resolutions are so very fresh in your memory, that you are hastening to ease your mind of every burthen it laboured under in the time of your sickness. ¶ You are to consider, that many things occur in time of sickness, to raise pious resolutions in men's hearts; but when health returns, those motives to seriousness are not only apt to cease, but to be succeeded by the hopes of long life, the distance of a future account, and a delight in the business and pleasures of this life: therefore, as God has restored you to health, you should consider yourself, not as *discharged*, but only as *reprieved*, from death; and that, as God granted the *reprieve*, so none but he can tell how long or short it shall be. ¶ Be persuaded likewise, to consider; that this may possibly be the last merciful warning, with time for repentance and amendment, that God will give you; and that your next sickness may be unto death; or (which is far more terrible) death may surprise you on a sudden, without

without any warning at all. ¶ **B**E persuaded then, I beseech you, not to trifle with your Maker; but, whilst he gives you this opportunity, be wise unto salvation. God in his great mercy has given you *new life*; and is waiting to see, whether you will become *a new creature*: if you do not make a right use, of the short time now allowed you; you may find the next return of his hand changed, from the correction of a loving and tender Father, into the vengeance of an angry God.

A Thanksgiving, after Recovery from Sickness.

ALmighty God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, I (thine unworthy servant, whom thou hast raised from a dangerous sickness) do now present myself before thee, in a thankful sense of thy great mercy and goodness towards me. Thou hast chastened and corrected me, but thou hast not given me over unto death. Blessed be thy holy name for supporting me under the pain and anguish of a sick bed, and for restoring me in thy good time to the blessings of strength and health [and * to the perfect use of my reason and understanding.] The pains and weakness, wherewith thou hast visited me, I know, O Lord, were intended for the improvement of my soul, and not for the punishment of my body; to convince me of the frailty of my nature, and of the uncertainty of my abode here; to bring me to a sense of the evil of my doings, and to a serious consideration of my future state. I am heartily grieved, at the sins and vanities of my former life; and do hereby solemnly renounce them all: and, in a just sense of my own weakness and frailty, I earnestly implore the assistance of thy holy spirit; to subdue my inordinate desires, and to keep me stedfast in every promise and resolution I made before thee in the day of my distress. Let thy late gracious warning of mortality teach me the uncertainty of my continuance here upon earth, and oblige me to live in a daily preparation to die; that, having profited by thy fatherly correction, and employing the remainder of my life to thy glory and the salvation of my own soul, I may be found worthy to enter into the joy of my Lord; to whom, with thee and the
ever-

* If the disorder had affected your understanding.

ever-blessed Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, by me and every creature, all thanksgiving and praise, honour, glory, power and dominion, both now and for evermore !
Amen.

An ADMONITION

To all such as intend to enter the State of
 MATRIMONY, agreeably to *Scripture* and
Human Laws.

I. **T**HAT they contract not with such persons, as are hereafter expressed, nor with any of like degree, against the laws of God, and the laws of the realm.

II. That they make no secret contracts, without consent or counsel of their parents or elders,* under whose authority they be, contrary to God's laws and man's ordinances.

☞ It is to be noted, that those persons, which be in the direct Line ascendent, and descendent, cannot marry together, although they be ever so far asunder in degree.

☞ It is likewise to be noted, that *consanguinity* and *affinity* (letting and dissolving matrimony) is contracted, as well in them and by them, which be of kindred by the one side ; as in and by them, which be of kindred by both sides. ☞ And also, That by the laws, *consanguinity* and *affinity* (letting and dissolving matrimony) is contracted, as well by *unlawful company* of man and woman, as by *lawful marriage*.

* No Children, under the age of one and twenty years compleat, shall contract themselves, or marry, without the consent of their parents ; or of their guardians and governors, if their parents be deceased : and whoever shall presume, to contract in the *degrees prohibited*, though he do it ignorantly ; besides, that the fruit of such copulation may be judged unlawful, is also punishable at the Ordinary's discretion. [Set forth by Archbishop PARKER, in 1563.]

None shall come near to any of the kindred of his flesh to uncover their shame : I am the Lord. *Levit. xviii. 6.*

A Man may not marry his

- 1 **G**randmother;
- 2 Grandfather's Wife,
- 3 Wife's Grandmother ;
- 4 Father's Sister,
- 5 Mother's Sister,
- 6 Father's Brother's Wife ;
- 7 Mother's Brother's Wife,
- 8 Wife's Father's Sister,
- 9 Wife's Mother's Sister ;
- 10 Mother,
- 11 Step-mother,
- 12 Wife's Mother ;
- 13 Daughter,
- 14 Wife's Daughter,
- 15 Son's Wife ;
- 16 Sister,
- 17 Wife's Sister,
- 18 Brother's Wife ;
- 19 Son's Daughter,
- 20 Daughter's Daughter,
- 21 Son's Son's Wife ;
- 22 Daughter's Son's Wife,
- 23 Wife's Son's Daughter,
- 24 Wife's Daughter's Daughter ;
- 25 Brother's Daughter,
- 26 Sister's Daughter,
- 27 Brother's Son's Wife ;
- 28 Sister's Son's Wife,
- 29 Wife's Brother's Daughter,
- 30 Wife's Sister's Daughter.

A Woman may not marry her

- 1 Grandfather,
- 2 Grandmother's Husband,
- 3 Husband's Grandfather ;
- 4 Father's Brother,
- 5 Mother's Brother,
- 6 Father's Sister's Husband ;
- 7 Mother's Sister's Husband.
- 8 Husband's Father's Brother,
- 9 Husband's Mother's Brother ;
- 10 Father,
- 11 Stepfather,
- 12 Husband's Father ;
- 13 Son,
- 14 Husband's Son,
- 15 Daughter's Husband ;
- 16 Brother,
- 17 Husband's Brother,
- 18 Sister's Husband ;
- 19 Son's Son,
- 20 Daughter's Son,
- 21 Son's Daughter's Husband ;
- 22 Daughter's Daughter's Husband,
- 23 Husband's Son's Son,
- 24 Husband's Daughter's Son ;
- 25 Brother's Son,
- 26 Sister's Son,
- 27 Brother's Daughter's Husband ;
- 28 Sister's Daughter's Husband,
- 29 Husband's Brother's Son,
- 30 Husband's Sister's Son.

A HELP to the Reading the Holy Scriptures ;

O R,

RULES, for the more profitable Reading the *Bible*, and instructing Persons of ordinary Understandings, what Parts of the *Old* and *New Testament* are fittest for them to read, and best suited to their several Necessities and Capacities.

THESE Holy Books all Christians look upon, as the oracles of God, and the sacred records of divine truth ; and whoever retains a due reverence for them, and makes them his study and meditation, will continue grounded and settled in the faith, and not be moved from the hope of the gospel. Licentiousness in opinion always makes way for Licentiousness in practice : I therefore most earnestly recommend to all, who are sincere lovers of truth, the careful reading of the holy scriptures ; which will afford to all, who seriously peruse them, so many internal arguments of their divine authority, as cannot be withstood by an ingenuous mind.

The Holy Spirit has condescended, to the weaker and more ignorant part of mankind, in that plain and unaffected style, wherewith all necessary truths are delivered ; so that he, who has much understanding, will find employment for his best thoughts, in searching out the deep things of God's word ; while he, who has but little, may thence learn enough, to make him wise unto salvation. But it is absolutely necessary, that persons of ordinary education and capacities should depend upon the judgment of those teachers and instructors, which God has placed over them, for the sense of difficult places of scripture : it is but reasonable, that persons of ordinary capacities, and such as have not made the study of the scriptures their business, ought to have the same deference for the judgment of their teachers, in difficulties relating to points of religion ; as those, who never studied law or physick, have for the judgment of lawyers or physicians in matters relating to their several professions.

sions. The meanest artificer thinks his trade and mystery not to be learned, without serving an apprenticeship; is it not then a shame, that many of those very persons fancy, the profession of divinity requires neither parts nor industry, but will leap into the doctor's chair? In some wise to prevent and remedy any such mistake, I shall now proceed to lay down particular rules and directions, for the right understanding and interpretation of these Holy Books.

The first rule I shall offer is this, That we should begin with reading the plainest books.

The *Gospels* are the most proper books for any person to begin with, who designs to make a good progress in scripture knowledge. For, *there* we have Him speaking to us, who came down from heaven on purpose, that he might instruct us, and teach us the way of God more perfectly: We have him speaking to us, who spake as never man did. Next to the *Gospels*, I would recommend the book of *Psalms*, as very proper to raise in our souls devout affections of faith and hope towards God, of love and thankfulness to him, of reverence to his name and word, and submission to his will and providence. I might proceed farther, but rather chuse to recommend to your observation the method, which St. *Jerome* prescribes in his epistle, concerning the education of *Leta's* daughter. He advises her, first to teach her daughter the *Psalms*; and 'let her (saith he) be entertained with these holy songs: let her then be instructed, in the common duties of life, by the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*: let her learn, from *Ecclesiastes*, to despise worldly things; and transcribe from *Job*, the practice of patience and virtue; let her pass then to the *Gospels*, and never let them be out of her hands; and then imbibe, with all the faculties of her mind, the *Acts* and *Epistles*. When she has enriched the storehouse of her breast, with those treasures, let her learn the books of *Moses*, *Joshua*, and *Judges*, the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*, the volumes of *Ezra* and *Esther*; and lastly, the *Canticles*.'

Yet, although it be adviseable, thus to read one portion of scripture before another; they all agree in teaching the same fundamental truths, and in promoting one
and

and the same excellent design, viz. the glory of God, and the eternal happiness of men.

The Books of the Old Testament

Are divided into

Historical, Moral, Psalms, and Prophets.

THE CONTENTS of the OLD TESTAMENT.

I. *THE HISTORICAL books* ; Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Duteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. II. *The MORAL books*, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. III. *The book of Psalms, reduced into such order, that every one may thereby find a help to raise their affections to God in every circumstance of life.* IV. *The PROPHETICAL books*, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggi, Zechariah, Malchi.

I. The HISTORICAL books begin, with an account of the beginning of the world : and afford us a prospect, unto the end of it. *Moses* begins with the history of the creation of the state of innocence, of the deluge, and of the peopling the world afterwards ; of all which wonderful transactions, the heathens had only an obscure tradition : he proceeds with giving an account of the fall of man, of the entrance of sin into the world, and those many evils and calamities, which it brought along with it ; displaying both the justice and goodness of God, in this matter. Here we see the scene of man's redemption, beginning to open, immediately after the creation ; to shew us, that Christ was the end of the law, and of all the dispensations of providence, which preceded it ; that he was the Lamb, slain in the purpose and decree of God, before the foundation of the world, and promised from or before ancient times.

Thus we find one and the same design pursued, from one end of the bible to the other ; and all the sacred writers agree, in displaying the great mystery of godliness, by various steps and degrees ; from the promise of the blessed seed in paradise, to the end and consummation of all things. Then *Moses* informs us, how God chose *Abraham* and his seed ; separating them from the rest of the world, and making a covenant with them ; that he would be their God, and they should be his people ; and that, in the fulness of time, the *promised Seed* should arise out of that nation : which was the first great step God made toward the fulfilling the promise of the *Messias*. This design was fulfilling, by various steps and degrees, for the space of (near) four thousand years together ; before it was fully compleat, and brought to perfection : and the remaining part of this history in the Old Testament is exactly pursued in a natural series of events ; for the space of near one thousand five hundred years ; the principal transactions having such a connection with, and dependence upon each other, that they do mutually support and confirm one another's credit.

I shall only farther remark, That the main body of the Sacred history, and all the chief materials of it, are taken out of the public records and monuments of the nation, to which the writers themselves do often appeal, particularly in the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles* ; and the connection, which is observable between these several books of the scripture history, is likewise a plain indication, that they were digested by public authority, and not the product of private pens ; delivering their thoughts with great freedom, and speaking the truth without reserve ; as if their only design was, to give God the glory, and recommend their writings to the good opinion of the readers by a naked manifestation of the truth.

To the end that these books may be read with greater profit, I have here, for the ready finding any part thereof, collected and referred to the most material passages contained in them.

G E N E S I S.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>The creation of the world and all things therein, <i>chap. 1. & 2 ver. 4.</i></p> <p>The creation of <i>Adam</i>, <i>c. 1 v. 27.</i> and of <i>Eve</i>, <i>c. 2 v. 22.</i></p> <p>The institution of the sabbath, <i>c. 2 v. 2.</i></p> <p>Paradise, <i>c. 2 v. 8.</i></p> <p>Marriage instituted, <i>c. 2 v. 24.</i></p> <p>The fall of man, <i>c. 3 v. 1.</i></p> <p>The promised seed, <i>c. 3 v. 15.</i></p> <p>The punishment of mankind, <i>c. 3 v. 16.</i></p> <p>The murder of <i>Abel</i> and curse of <i>Cain</i>, <i>c. 4 v. 8.</i></p> <p>The godliness and translation of <i>Enoch</i>, <i>c. 5 v. 24.</i></p> <p>An account of the ark and God's grace to <i>Noah</i>, <i>c. 6. & 7.</i></p> <p>The flood described, <i>c. 7. & 8.</i></p> <p>God's covenant with <i>Noah</i>, <i>c. 8 v. 20. & c. 9 to v. 13.</i></p> <p><i>Nimrod</i>, the first monarch <i>c. 10 v. 8.</i></p> <p>Building of <i>Babel</i> and confusion of tongues, <i>c. 11 v. 3.</i></p> <p>God's blessing and promise to <i>Abram</i>, <i>c. 12 v. 1. & c. 13 v. 14. & c. 15 v. 4.</i></p> <p><i>Abram's</i> travels, <i>c. 12 v. 4. & c. 13.</i></p> | <p><i>Abram</i> disagrees with <i>Lot</i>, <i>c. 13 v. 7.</i></p> <p>—His battle with five kings, <i>c. 14 v. 1.</i></p> <p>—Is blessed by <i>Melchizedek</i>, <i>c. 14 v. 19.</i></p> <p>—Encouraged by God, <i>c. 15 v. 1.</i></p> <p>—Is promised a son, <i>v. 4.</i></p> <p>—Is justified by faith, <i>c. 15 v. 6.</i></p> <p><i>Hagar</i> and <i>Ismael's</i> distress, <i>c. 16. & 21 v. 15.</i></p> <p><i>Abram's</i> name changed to <i>Abraham</i>, <i>c. 17 v. 5.</i></p> <p>Circumcision instituted, <i>c. 17 v. 10.</i></p> <p><i>Abraham</i> entertaineth angels, and prayeth for the inhabitants of <i>Sodom</i>, <i>c. 18 v. 1.</i></p> <p><i>Lot</i> entertaineth angels, <i>c. 19 v. 1.</i></p> <p>—Obtains favour of God, <i>c. 19 v. 12.</i></p> <p><i>Sodom</i> and <i>Gomorrab</i> destroyed, <i>c. 19 v. 24.</i></p> <p><i>Lot's</i> wife turned into a pillar of Salt, <i>c. 19 v. 26.</i></p> <p><i>Abimelech</i> deceived by <i>Abraham</i> and afflicted, <i>c. 20.</i></p> <p><i>Abraham</i> offers <i>Isaac</i>, <i>c. 22.</i></p> <p><i>Isaac's</i> journey and marriage of <i>Rebecca</i>, <i>c. 24 v. 10.</i></p> <p><i>Abraham's</i> death and burial, <i>c. 25 v. 8. & 9.</i></p> <p><i>Esau</i> selleth his birthright, <i>c. 25 v. 29.</i></p> <p><i>Jacob</i> deceiveth his father in</p> |
|---|---|

in prejudice to *Eſau*, c.

27. v. 1

The viſion of *Jacob's* ladder, c. 28. v. 12.

Jacob's vow, c. 28. v. 20.

—He arrives at *Haran* and ſerveth *Laban* for his daughters, c. 29. v. 1.

—His policy whereby he became rich, c. 30. v. 37.

—His departure and covenant with *Laban*, c. 31. v. 1.

—Is afraid of *Eſau*, endeavours to appeaſe him, and wreſtleth with an angel, c. 32. v. 24.

The meeting of *Jacob* and *Eſau*, c. 33. v. 1.

The murder of the *Shechemites* by the ſons of *Jacob*, c. 34. v. 25.

Joſeph hated and ſold by his brethren, c. 37. v. 1.

—Is advanced in *Potiphar's* houſe, tempted by his miſtreſs and imprifoned, c. 39. v. 1.

—Interpreteth the dreams of the chief baker and butler, c. 40. v. 5.

—Of *Pharaoh*, c. 41. v. 25.

—Is advanced next to *Pharaoh*, c. 41. v. 38.

The famine in *Egypt*, &c. v. 54 to c. 48.

The ſorrow of *Joſeph's* brethren, c. 42. v. 16.

Judah's ſupplication to *Joſeph*, c. 44. v. 14.

Joſeph maketh himſelf known

to his brethren, c. 45. v.

1.

Jacob goeth into *Egypt* to *Joſeph* his ſon, c. 46. v. 5.

—Bleſſeth *Joſeph's* children, c. 48. v. 9.

—Propheſieth his family's return to *Canaan*, c. 48. v. 21.

—Bleſſeth his ſons and dieth, c. 49. v. 1.

—His funeral, c. 50. v. 7.

Joſeph propheſieth, dieth, and is embalmed, c. 50. v. 26.

EXODUS.

The *Israelites* perſecuted in *Egypt* after the death of *Joſeph*, c. 1. v. 8.

Pharaoh commands the midwives to kill the male children, c. 1. v. 16.

Moses born, c. 2. v. 1.

—How preſerved, v. 5.

—His flight into *Midian*, v. 15.

God appears to *Moses* in a burning buſh and ſends him to the *Israelites*, c. 3.

v. 2

His meſſage, c. 3. v. 15

The name of God, c. 3. v. 14 & c. 6. v. 3.

Moses inſtructed by God. c. 4. v. 1.

God's meſſage to *Pharaoh* by *Moses* and *Aaron*, c. 4. v. 21.

Its effects, c. 5. 7, 8, 9, 10,

11.

Plagues

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Plagues of <i>Egypt</i>, c. 5, to 12.
 The passover instituted, c. 12. v. 3.
 Its ordinance, c. 12. v. 43. c. 13. v. 3. See 2 <i>Chron.</i> c. 30. v. 1. c. 35. v. 1.
 The <i>Israelites</i> driven out of <i>Egypt</i>, c. 12. v. 31.
 Their journey and passage through the <i>Red-Sea</i>, c. 13. v. 14.
 Are pursued by <i>Pharaoh</i>, c. 14. v. 5.
 The <i>Egyptians</i> drowned in the <i>Red-Sea</i>, c. 14. v. 23.
 <i>Moses's</i> Song, c. 15.
 The <i>Israelites</i> murmur for water, c. 15. v. 22. & c. 17.
 —For bread, c. 16. v. 2.
 —How supplied with food, v. 4.
 The history of manna, c. 16. v. 14.
 Water gushing out of the Rock, c. 17. v. 5.
 An intercourse between <i>Moses</i> and <i>Jethro</i>, c. 18.
 God's message to the <i>Israelites</i> on mount <i>Sinai</i>, c. 19. v. 3.
 The publication of the ten commandments, c. 20. v. 1.
 Laws concerning men servants, c. 21. v. 2.
 —Women servants, c. 21. v. 7.
 —Man slaughter, c. 21. v. 12.
 —Stealers of men, c. 21. v. 6.</p> | <p>Laws concerning Curser of parents, c. 21. v. 17.
 —Smiter, c. 21. v. 18.
 —Hurt by chance, c. 21. v. 22.
 —An ox that goreth, c. 21. v. 28.
 —Him that hurteth, c. 21. v. 33.
 —Theft, c. 22. v. 1.
 —Damage, c. 22. v. 5.
 —Trespases, c. 22. v. 7.
 —Borrowing, c. 22. v. 14.
 —Fornication, c. 22. v. 16.
 —Witchcraft, c. 22. v. 18.
 —Bestiality, c. 22. v. 19.
 —Idolatry, c. 22. v. 20. c. 23. v. 13.
 —Strangers, Widows, Orphans, c. 22. v. 23.
 —Usury, c. 22. v. 25.
 —Pledges, c. 22. v. 26.
 —Reverence to magistrates, c. 22. v. 28.
 —First-Fruits, c. 22. v. 29.
 —Slander, and false witness, c. 23. v. 1.
 —Justice, c. 23. v. 3.
 —Charitableness, c. 23. v. 4.
 —Year of rest, c. 23. v. 10.
 —<i>Sabbath</i>, c. 23. v. 12.
 —Three Feasts, c. 23. v. 14.
 —Blood and fat of sacrifices, c. 23. v. 18.
 <i>Moses</i> in the mountain forty days and nights, c. 24. v. 1.
 The form of the ark, c. 25. v. 10. c. 37. v. 1.
 The mercy seat, c. 25. v. 17. & c. 37. v. 6.</p> |
|---|---|

The table, c. 25. v. 23. c. 37. v. 10.

The candlestick, c. 25. v. 31. c. 37. v. 17.

The furniture of the tabernacle, c. 26. v. 1. c. 35. v. 5.

The altar of burnt-offering, c. 27. v. 1. c. 38. v. 1.

Aaron and his sons set apart for the priests office, c. 28. v. 1. c. 40. v. 13. See *Levit.* c. 8. v. 1.

—His garments and dress, c. 28. v. 5. c. 39. v. 1.

The manner of consecrating the priests, c. 29. v. 1.

The altar of incense, c. 30. v. 1. c. 37. v. 25.

The ransom of souls, c. 30. v. 12.

The brazen laver, c. 30. v. 18. c. 38. v. 8.

The holy anointing oil, c. 30. v. 22. c. 37. v. 29.

The *Sabbath* day commanded, c. 31. v. 13. c. 35. v. 2.

Moses receiveth the two tables, c. 31. v. 18. and breaketh them, c. 32. v. 19.

The *Israelites* worship a molten calf, c. 32. v. 1.

Moses talketh with God and desires to see his glory, c. 33. v. 9.

—Receiveth two other tables; and God's covenant with the *Israelites*, c. 34. v. 1. where also you read the history of the law,

and the terrible manner in which it was published.

LEVITICUS.

The law of burnt offerings, c. 1. & 6. v. 9.

—Meat-offering, c. 2. & 6. v. 14.

—Peace offering, c. 3. & 7. v. 11.

—Sin-offering, c. 4. & 6. v. 25. c. 16. v. 11.

—Trespass-offering, c. 5. v. 6. c. 6. & 7. v. 1.

—The offering at the consecration of a priest, c. 6. v. 19.

The consecration of *Aaron*, c. 8. v. 1. c. 9.

The punishment of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, c. 10. v. 1.

Meats clean and unclean, c. 11.

Laws concerning women after child-birth, c. 12. v. 2.

—Leprosy, c. 13. v. 1.

The scape-goat, c. 16. v. 20.

The feasts of expiations, c. 16. v. 29.

Unlawful marriages, c. 18. v. 1.

—Lusts, c. 18. v. 19.

Laws against incest, sodomy, and bestiality, c. 20. v. 11.

The feasts of *Passover*, *Pentecost*, *Trumpets* and *Tabernacles*, c. 23. v. 4.

The

The day of atonements, c. 23. v. 26.

The punishment for blasphemy, c. 24. v. 11.

The *Sabbath* of the seventh year, c. 25. v. 1.

The year of *Jubilee*, c. 25. v. 8.

A blessing to those that keep the commandments, c. 26. v. 3.

A curse to those that break them, c. 26. v. 14.

Repentance acceptable to God, c. 26. v. 40.

The laws of vows, c. 27. v. 1.

NUMBERS.

The order of the twelve tribes in their tents, c. 2.

The law of the *Nazarites*, c. 6. v. 1.

The form of blessing the people, c. 6. v. 24.

A second *Passover* allowed, c. 9. v. 2.

The election of the seventy elders to assist *Moses*, c. 11. v. 16.

The murmuring *Israelites* are deprived of entering into the land of *Canaan*, c. 14. v. 26.

The punishment for violating the *Sabbath*, c. 15. v. 32.

The rebellion of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and its punishment, c. 16. v. 1.

Aaron's rod, c. 17. v. 1.

The *Israelites* plagued with fiery serpents, cured by the *brazen Serpent*, c. 21. v. 4.

Balaam's ass, and behaviour with *Balak*, c. 22. v. 22.

—Parable, c. 23. v. 7. & 18.

—Prophecy, c. 24. v. 2.

Phineas's covenant with God, c. 25. v. 10.

Jeshua appointed to succeed *Moses*, c. 27. v. 18.

DEUTERONOMY.

Moses's prayer to enter into *Canaan*, c. 3. v. 23.

The cities of refuge, c. 4. v. 41.

The rebellions of the *Israelites*, c. 9. v. 7.

Duty of a king, c. 17. v. 16.

Moses prophesieth of *Christ*, c. 18. v. 15.

Of muzzling the ox, c. 25. v. 4.

The curses pronounced on mount *Ebal*, c. 27. v. 14. & c. 28. v. 15.

The blessings for obedience, c. 28. v. 1.

The cursings for disobedience, c. 28. v. 15.

Secret things belong to God, c. 29. v. 29.

God's mercy promised to repentance, c. 30. v. 1.

Moses's song on God's mercy and vengeance, c. 32. v. 1.

The death of *Moses*, c. 34. v. 5.

JOSHUA.

J O S H U A.

Joshua succeeds *Moses*, c. 1. v. 1.

The history of *Rahab* and the spies, c. 2. v. 1.

The *Israelites* pass over *Jordan*, c. 3. & 4.

Manna ceaseth, c. 5. v. 12.

Achan detected and punished, c. 7. v. 18.

The craft of the *Gibeonites*, c. 9. v. 3.

The sun and moon stand still at the command of *Joshua*, c. 10. v. 12.

Six cities of refuge, c. 20. v. 7.

Joshua's exhortation before his death, c. 23. v. 1.

—Death and burial, c. 24. v. 29.

J U D G E S.

Sisera slain, c. 4. v. 1.

The song of *Deborah* and *Barak*, c. 5. v. 1.

The history of *Gideon*, c. 6. v. 11. to c. 8. v. 32.

Jephtha's vow, c. 11. v. 29.

An angel appears to *Manoah*, c. 13. v. 8.

The history of *Samson*, c. 13. v. 42. to c. 17.

I S A M U E L.

Hannah's grief and prayer for a child, c. 1. v. 1.

—Her song, c. 2. v. 1.

The sin and punishment of *Eli's* sons, c. 2. v. 12. & 27.

The history of *Samuel*, c. 2.

v. 18. c. 3, 7, 8. c. 9. v.

18. c. 10. v. 1. c. 12. v.

1. c. 13. v. 8. c. 15. v.

1. 33. c. 16. v. 1. c. 19.

v. 18. c. 25. v. 1. c. 28.

v. 9.

Saul anointed king, c. 10. v. 1.

David anointed king, c. 16.

v. 13. See 2 *Sam.* c. 2. v.

1. & c. 5. v. 1.

The combat of *David* with *Goliath*, c. 17. v. 48.

The witch of *Endor*, c. 28. v. 7.

2 S A M U E L.

David's lamentation for the death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, c. 1. v. 17.

The murder of *Uriah*, c. 11. v. 6.

Nathan bringeth *David* to repentance, c. 12. v. 1.

Solomon born, c. 12. v. 24.

A Psalm of thanksgiving, c. 22. v. 1.

The disaster of *Israel* by *David's* numbering the people, c. 24. v. 1.

I K I N G S.

Solomon made king, c. 1. v. 32.

—His choice of wisdom, c. 3. v. 9.

—His judgment between two harlots, c. 3. v. 16.

—His household and officer's, c. 4. v. 7. See 2 *Chron.* c.

9. v. 13.

The

The building of the temple, *Elisba's* bones raise the dead, *c. 6. v. 7.*
Solomon's blessing, prayer, &c. *Hezekiab's* good reign, and *c. 13. v. 21.*
 at the dedication of the wars with *Affyria*, *c. 16.*
 temple, *c. 8. v. 1.* See 2 *v. 19. c. 18. v. 1.* See 2
Chron. c. 6. v. 12. | *Chron. c. 29. v. 1. to 32.*
 God's covenant with *Solo-* *Sennacherib's* defeat, *c. 19.*
mon, c. 9. v. 1. *Hezekiab* receives a message
 The journey of the queen of of his death, *c. 20 v. 1.*
Sh-ba, c. 10. v. 1. See 2 The sun goeth backward ten
Chron. c. 9. v. 1. | degrees, *c. 20. v. 8.*
 The fall of *Solomon*, *c. 11. v.* *Josiab's* good reign, *c. 22. v.*
 4. | 1.

The history of the disobedient prophet and *Jeroboam*, *c. 13.*

Elijab fed by ravens, *c. 17. v. 1.*

—Worketh miracles at *Zarephath*, *c. 17. v. 8.*

—Reproveth *Ahab*, and brings fire from heaven, *c. 18. v. 17.*

Is comforted by an angel in the wilderness, *c. 19 v. 4.*

The murder of *Naboth*, *c. 21. v. 5.*

2 KINGS.

Elijab taken up into heaven, *c. 2. v. 1.*

Bears destroy the children that mocked *Elisba*, *c. 2. v. 23.*

Elisba multiplieth the widow's oil, &c. *c. 2. v. 1.*

Naaman cured of his leprosy, *c. 5 v. 8.*

Gebazi struck with leprosy *c. 5. v. 20.*

Jezebel devoured by dogs, *c. 9. v. 30.*

1 CHRONICLES.

David's psalm of thanksgiving, *c. 16. v. 7. c. 17. v. 16. & c. 29. v. 10.*

You may read in the 28th chap. ver. 9. king *David's* charge, before his death, to his son king *Solomon*;
 " Know thou the God of
 " thy father, and serve
 " him with a perfect
 " heart, and with a willing mind, &c."

2 CHRONICLES.

You have the pious life of *Josiab*, and his sorrowful death, in the 34th and 35th chapters: and, in the 36th chapter, God's merciful dealing with the people of the *Jews* is so set forth, as to be fit to affect and terrify the unrepenting sinner.

EZRA.

E Z R A.

The proclamation of *Cyrus*,
for building the temple,
c. 1. v. 1.

—Of *Darius*, *c. 6. v. 1.*

—Of *Artaxerxes*, *c. 7. v. 11.*

Ezra's prayer and confession,
c. 9. v. 5.

N E H E M I A H.

Nehemiah's mourning, fasting
and prayer, *c. 1. v. 1.*

Artaxerxes's commission for
building *Jerusalem*, *c. 2.*
v. 1.

The manner of hearing and
reading the law, *c. 8. v.*
1. c. 13. v. 1.

A solemn fast, repentance,
and confession, *c. 9.* in
which is included a great
variety of extraordinary
providences; as, in par-
ticular, a short history of
God's dealing with the
Israelites; and of the un-
worthy return they made
him, in breaking his com-
mands.

E S T H E R.

The advancement of *Morde-
cai*, and punishment of
Haman, *c. 8.*

II. The MORAL Books are so called; because their chief design is, to instruct us in the ways of virtue, and to give rules for the direction and good government of our lives. These are the books of *Job*, the *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*.

J O B.

The book of *Job* was written on purpose to teach us the great duty of patience and submission to God's will in all events. Pious and devout souls may find great pleasure as well as reap much profit, in the careful perusal of this book; which recommends itself to the reader above all other books of Holy Writ, by the wit and elegance of the composition; where human passions are described, with the most tender and lively strokes; where are to be found the most elevated and noble thoughts concerning the power and majesty of God, and the most devout expressions of that submission and resignation which is due to his will, and of that trust and confidence which good men have in his mercy, even in the depth of their afflictions, arising from the testimony of their conscience: of which particulars, the reader will find many examples, in the following directions.

Satan.

Satan permitted to tempt <i>Job</i> , c. 1. v. 6.	of the body, c. 19. v. 25.
<i>Job</i> 's behaviour in affliction, c. 2. v. 7. c. 6. v. 1. c. 7. v. 13. c. 9. v. 14. & c. 29.	The state and portion of the wicked, c. 20.
—Impatience, c. 3. v. 1. c. 7. v. 1. c. 10. v. 18.	<i>Job</i> 's desire to see God, c. 23.
Inconsideration, its harm, c. 5. v. 1.	The secret judgment for the wicked, c. 24. v. 17.
The happy end of God's correction, c. 5. v. 17.	Man cannot be justified be- fore God, c. 25.
God's justice defended, c. 8 c. 33. v. 8. c. 34. v. 10. c. 36. v. 1.	The infinite power of God, c. 26. v. 5.
<i>Job</i> 's confidence in God, c. 13. v. 14.	The state of the wicked, c. 21. c. 24. c. 27. v. 8. See <i>Psf.</i> 1. v. 4
Sin the cause of corruption, c. 14. v. 16.	<i>Job</i> 's integrity, c. 31. v. 1.
<i>Job</i> believes the resurrection	<i>Job</i> and his three friends, c. 32. v. 1.
	<i>Job</i> 's humiliation, c. 40. v. 1.
	—His age and death, c. 41. v. 16.

P R O V E R B S.

The *Proverbs* contain excellent instructions, for the ordering men's actions, in all states and conditions of life, from the highest to the lowest; and enforce each part of our duty from religious motives. *Solomon* lays down this rule, as the foundation of all his instructions: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This is a true and solid principle of an universal probity and integrity, both of mind and action; whereas the notions of philosophers are but fine speculations, to amuse men of subtilty and leisure, and not fitted for the use of ordinary capacities: I say, so faint are the persuasives, and feeble the reproofs of philosophy, when compared with the instructions and motives contained in the book of *Proverbs*, which is peculiarly adapted to the meanest capacities; that I would particularly recommend it to their frequent reading and diligent perusal, especially in these particular points following.

An exhortation to fear God, c. 1. v. 7.	Admonitions to avoid bad company, c. 2.
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Godly

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| Godly exhortations, c. 3. & | Observations about conten- |
| 4. v. 20. & c. 5, 6, 7. | tious busy bodies, c. 26. |
| The praise of wisdom, c. 8. | v. 17. |
| v. 1. | —Self-love, c. 27. v. 1. |
| Observations on moral vir- | —True love, c. 27. v. 5. |
| tues, and their contrary vi- | —About impiety and inte- |
| ces, c. 10. to c. 25. | grity, c. 21. |
| The value of a good name, | —Public government, c. 29. |
| c. 22. v. 1. | v. 1. |
| Advice concerning envy, c. | —Private government, c. 29. |
| 24. v. 1. | v. 15. |
| Observations about kings, c. | —Anger, pride, &c. c. 29. |
| 25. v. 1. | v. 22. |
| —Avoiding of quarrels, c. | Agur's confession of faith, c. |
| 25 v. 8. | 30. v. 1. |
| —Fools, c. 26. v. 1. | —Prayer, c. 30. v. 7. |
| —About sluggards, c. 26. v. | The praise and properties of |
| 13. | a good wife, c. 31. v. 10. |

ECCLESIASTES.

The book of *Ecclesiastes* was written, to convince us of the vanity of all things here below; and by one who had tried what satisfaction could be found in all manner of worldly enjoyments; and was acquainted with the extravagancies of madness and folly, as well as with the mysteries of wisdom and knowledge. Yet at last this great prince instructs us, not to set our hearts too much upon the things of this world, as being empty and unsatisfactory in the enjoyment, and ending in vexation of spirit: not to promise ourselves too much happiness, in any worldly blessings; because we shall be disappointed: but to use the good things of this world, with sobriety and moderation in respect to ourselves, with submission and thankfulness to God, and with charity to our neighbours; always remembering, that the fashion of this world passes away, and the flower of youth soon decays and withers. Upon which consideration, we ought to consecrate the best of our years to the service of God, whilst we have a quick and lively sense of his blessings; and not defer the thoughts of religion, until the evil day come, until old age steal upon us, and death be just ready to seize us; for then cometh judgment, when we must give an account

count of all our thoughts, words, and deeds; as the following directions more particularly shew.

The vanity of all human courses, c. 1. v. 1. c. 2. v. 1. c. 3. v. 1.	c. 6. v. 11.
Vanity, how increased, c. 4. v. 1.	All things come alike to all, c. 9. v. 1.
Vanities in divine service, c. 5. v. 1.	Directions for charity, c. 11. v. 1.
The conclusion of vanities,	Death should be thought on by youth, c. 11. v. 7. c. 12. v. 1.

P S A L M S.

III. The book of PsALMS is suited, to the several circumstances of devout minds. Some of them instructs us, to give God the glory due unto his name, and praise him according to his excellent greatness, as it is made manifest in the works of Creation and providence; as particularly the 8th, 19th, 33d, 103d, 104th, 107th, and 148th. Others shew forth his marvellous lovingkindness to his church, to *Jacob* his people, and *Israel* his inheritance; and foretel the glories of *Christ's* coming, and his kingdom: of which sort are the 2d, 45th, 68th, 72d, 78th, 96th, 98th, 105th, 106th, 110th, 111th, 136th, and many more. Again, some Psalms declare the excellency of God's law, which he has given us, to be a light to our feet, and a guide to our paths; and shew the happiness of those, who live under the conduct of it: such are the 1st, the 19th, and above all the 119th; which consists of the highest encomiums of God's law, and the most earnest prayers for grace to understand and practise it. At other times the Psalmist directs us how to humble ourselves in the sight of God; to implore the pardon of our sins, and help in the time of trouble: of which kind the most principal Psalms are the 25th, 51st, 130th, 141st, 143d. In many Psalms he exhorts us, to submit to God's will in all events, and to put our trust in his mercy; to tarry God's leisure (as he sometimes expresses it) who will never fail those who seek him, and is the helper of the friendless: of which sort the most remarkable Psalms are the 9th, 10th, and 11th. And lastly (not to mention many

many others, in several of which the Psalmist instructs us not to regard ourselves only, but likewise to be mindful of the afflictions of *Joseph*, and pray to God to deliver *Israel* out of all his troubles) every person may find, in the following collection, a Psalm that shall suit him, and help him to raise his affections to God in every circumstance of life.

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| <p>The security of God's protection, <i>psalm</i> 3. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 16. v. 1.</p> <p>The providence and justice of God, <i>ps</i> 11. v. 4.</p> <p>The description of a good man, <i>ps</i> 15.</p> <p>A psalm of praise, <i>ps</i> 18.</p> <p>A thanksgiving for victory, <i>ps</i> 21. v. 1.</p> <p>Confidence in God's grace, <i>ps</i> 23.</p> <p>A prayer for remission of sins, <i>ps</i> 25. v. 7. See <i>ps</i> 32 v. 1. & <i>ps</i> 51. v. 1.</p> <p>A prayer for safety, and our enemies confusion, <i>ps</i> 35. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 55. v. 9. <i>ps</i> 56. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 59. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 64. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 69. v. 22. <i>ps</i> 70.</p> <p>A persuasive to patience and confidence in God, <i>ps</i> 37.</p> <p>Resolutions against impatience and fear of death, <i>ps</i> 39. v. 1.</p> <p>A prayer in time of affliction, <i>ps</i> 38. & 39 v. 10.</p> <p>Obedience the best sacrifice, <i>ps</i> 40. v. 6.</p> <p>A song of joy, <i>ps</i> 45.</p> <p>A prayer after the conquering of a temptation, <i>ps</i> 73. v. 1.</p> | <p>An exhortation to hear God's word, <i>ps</i> 78 v. 1.</p> <p>—To thanksgiving, <i>ps</i> 81. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 95. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 96. <i>ps</i> 100 v. 1. <i>ps</i> 103.</p> <p>A prayer in great distress, <i>ps</i> 88 & 102.</p> <p>The state of the godly, <i>ps</i> 91 v. 1.</p> <p>A psalm for the <i>sabbath-day</i>, <i>ps</i> 92.</p> <p>A vow or godly resolution, <i>ps</i> 101. <i>ps</i> 104. v. 33.</p> <p>A meditation on God's power and providence, <i>ps</i> 104. v. 1.</p> <p>An exhortation to thanksgiving, <i>ps</i> 105. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 106. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 107. v. 1. <i>ps</i> 113, v. 1. <i>ps</i> 117.</p> <p>—To praise God, <i>ps</i> 118. <i>ps</i> 134. <i>ps</i> 135. v. 1.</p> <p>—For thanks for particular mercies received, <i>ps</i> 136. 148. & 150.</p> <p>The story of the <i>Israelites</i> rebellion and God's mercy, <i>ps</i> 106. v. 7.</p> <p>Prayers, praises, and professions of obedience, <i>ps</i> 119.</p> <p>God's blessings on the righteous, <i>ps</i> 128.</p> <p>Upon all <i>penitential</i> occasions read one or more of the fol-</p> |
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following <i>psalms</i> , viz. the	are (in a more particular
1st, 4th, 6th, 8th, 18th,	manner) called the <i>seven</i>
19th, 22d, 25th, 34th,	<i>penitential psalms</i> .
36th, 37th, 50th, 73d,	SOLOMON'S SONGS.
84th, 90th, 91st, 103d,	A description of <i>Christ</i> by
107th, 118th 119th,	his <i>graces</i> , <i>chap. 5. ver. 9.</i>
146th.	The <i>graces</i> of the church,
<i>Note</i> , the 6th, 32d, 38th,	<i>c. 6. v. 4. c. 7. v. 1.</i>
51st, 102d, 130th, 143d,	

IV. The PROPHEITICAL Books admonish the people of their duty, and quicken them to the practice of it, by setting God's judgments and mercies before their eyes. They keep up a sense of providence in their minds; they foretel the times of the Messiah, and prepare mens minds for the reception of him.

The most obscure parts of the prophetical writings ought not to be despised, as altogether useless. Though we suppose them of no use to the church, at present; yet they may be useful to after times: and, what they mean, though we know not now, yet we may know hereafter.

Another particular, in the writings of the prophets, best suited to common capacities, is that holy zeal, where-with they reprove the vices of the times they lived in; and those pathetic exhortations, whereby they persuade sinners, to amend their ways, and break off their sins by a sincere repentance: beseeching them, by the mercies of God, by all that he has done for them, by the obligations he has laid upon them, and the right he has to their service; recounting his past favours towards them, and renewing his gracious promises for the time to come; and, if these gentle methods will not prevail with sinners, then representing to them the greatness of God's majesty, the dread of his power, the fierceness of his anger, their own monstrous ingratitude and incorrigibleness; in abusing his mercies, in despising his judgments, in resisting his spirit, and in rendering ineffectual all those methods, which Divine wisdom itself could make use of, to recover sinners from the error of their ways. All which will be much better understood, if the reader will be pleased to attend to the following particulars.

ISAIAH.

I S A I A H.

Israel's complaint, c. 1. v. 1.

God's judgments against covetousness, c. 5. v. 8.

The restoration of *Israel*, and vocation of the *Gentiles*, c. 11. v. 10, c. 14, v. 1. c. 49, v. 18, c. 54. v. 1.

A thanksgiving for mercies, c. 12.

The desolation of *Babylon*, c. 13. v. 19.

The blessings of *Christ's* kingdom, c. 32. v. 1. c. 35. v. 1.

Sennacherib invadeth *Judeab* c. 36. v. 1.

An exhortation to a trust in *Christ*, c. 51.

A prophecy of *Christ's* sufferings, c. 53.

The office of *Christ*, c. 61. v. 1.

The blessed state of the new *Jerusalem*, c. 65. v. 17.

J E R E M I A H.

Read the 5th chapter, particularly v. 22. "Fear ye not me? said the Lord," &c. Read also the 17th, 18th, and 31st chapters: in the 31st and following verses of which last, you find a large and excellent account of that new covenant, referred to in the 8th chap. of the epistle to the *Hebrews*: and chap. 35, where the great

example of obedience in the *Rechabites* is proposed for the instruction. From the 52d chap. by the terrible sufferings of *Zedekiah*, the greatest men may learn, to stand in awe of God, to be humble and moderate, and under a constant sense of the uncertainty of the enjoyments of this world; as also from king *Jehoiakim's* advancement in the 37th year of his captivity, not to despond, much less to despair, upon the long continuance of misfortunes or afflictions.

L A M E N T A T I O N S.

Read the 3d chapter in time of calamity.

E Z E K I E L.

Ezekiel's vision of the four wheels, c. 1. v. 15.

Ezekiel encouraged by God, c. 3, v. 4.

A reproof to servile preachers, c. 13.

Every man answerable for his own sins only, c. 18. v. 20.

The whoredoms of *Abolab* and *Abolibab*, c. 23.

Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, c. 37.

D A N I E L.

Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation, c. 2. v. 31, c. 4, v. 4.

The

The three children in the fiery furnace, *c. 3. v. 13.*

Belshazzar's impious feast, *c. 5. v. 1.*

Daniel in the lion's den, *c. 6. v. 10.*

A confession of sins, *c. 9. v. 3.*

The seventy weeks, *c. 9. v. 20.*

Israel to be destroyed, *c. 12.*

HOSEA.

God's judgments against a sinful people, *Ec. c. 2. v. 6. c. 4. v. 1. c. 5. v. 1.*

See *c. 8. v. 1.*

—His promises of reconciliation with them, *c. 2. v. 14. See c. 5. v. 15. c. 13. v. 9. c. 14. v. 4.*

An exhortation to repentance, *c. 6. v. 1. c. 12. v. 3. c. 14. v. 1.*

God's abhorrence of hypocrisy, *c. 7. v. 11.*

God threateneth destruction to the impious, *c. 8. v. 1.*

The distress and captivity of *Israel* for their sins, *c. 9. v. 1.*

JOEL.

An exhortation to fasting, *c. 1. v. 14.*

AMOS.

An exhortation to repentance, *c. 5. v. 4.*

JONAH.

The history of *Jonah*, *c. 1. & 2.*

The repentance of the *Ninevites*, *c. 3. v. 5.*

Jonah's gourd, *c. 4.* In which particulars there is enough, to make the disobedient tremble, and the penitent hope, under the most terrible denunciations of judgment, and promises of pardon.

MICAH.

Read the 5th, 6th, & 7th chapters.

NAHUM.

The majesty of God, in goodness to his people, and severity against his enemies, *c. 1.*

The miserable ruin of *Nineveh*, *c. 3.*

HABAKKUK.

Read the 2d *chap.* (particularly, the 15th and 16th *ver.*) against provoking to immoderate drinking, and the 17th & 18th *ver.* of the 3d *chap.* which excite to trust in God, in the most unfavourable circumstances.

HAGGAI.

Read the 2d *chapter*; where (at the 7th, 8th, & 9th *verses*) you have an illustrious prophecy of our Lord's coming, in the time of the second temple.

ZECHA-

ZECHARIAH.

Read the 5th, 12th and 13th
chapters.

MALACHI.

Read the 3d *chap.* at the
16th, 17th & 18th *ver.*
which shew, how religion

was exercised in the former ages of the world; what acceptance, and what encouragement it met with, from God; and what satisfaction we shall find in it at last.

The Books of the New Testament,

Are divided into the

Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelation.

The CONTENTS.

- I. *THE GOSPELS* described; with particular Rules and Directions, for the profitable reading of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John; containing the Doctrine, Parables, Miracles, Manner of Life and Conversation, and the Circumstances of our Saviour's Death. II. *The Acts of the Apostles.* III. *The EPISTLES*, to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians; to Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and to the Hebrews. *The Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude.* IV. *The REVELATION of John the Divine.*

THIS title of the NEW TESTAMENT might more properly be translated the *New Covenant*; as it is distinguished from the *former Covenant*, which God made with the *Jews*, by the ministry and mediation of *Moses*: whereas the *New Covenant* is a *covenant of Grace*; and is thereupon called the *Gift of grace*, and *Abundance of grace*; because it makes merciful allowances, for the unavoidable frailties of human nature; and sets forth Christ to be a *propitiation for the sins* of all those, who truly repent, and endeavour to please God by a sincere though imperfect obedience.

The

The G O S P E L S.

I. The G O S P E L S contain these principal matters : Our Lord's *doctrine* and *parables*, His *miracles*, His manner of *life*, and the circumstances of his *death*.

1. Our Lord's *Doctrine* appears, more plainly and openly, in his *sermons* and other *discourses* ; and more obscurely and reservedly, in his *parables*.

I shall chiefly take notice of his glorious, full, and admirable sermon, which he delivered upon the Mount ; and is contained in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St. *Matthew*. It comprehends the very marrow and quintessence of christianity, and ought to be the daily subject of every good christian's reading and meditation, until he have copied it into his life and conversation. The sum of our Saviour's preaching consists, in teaching this one great and fundamental truth of christianity ; that *we are nothing, and God is all in all*: his word enlightens our minds, his spirit directs our wills, his providence orders our affairs, his grace guides us here, and his mercy must bring us to heaven hereafter.

2. As to his *Parables* : It was the custom of the wise men among the ancients to clothe their instructions in apt stories and suitable comparisons : this they did, at once to please and to instruct ; to excite men's attention, by gratifying their curiosity ; and to quicken their memory, by entertaining their fancy. Our Saviour took his method, to recommend his weighty instructions, and to make them sink deeper into the minds of his hearers. The same method was likewise very proper, to deliver the mysteries of the Gospel with some degree of obscurity and reserve ; which he did, both to excite men's industry, in searching further into the deep things of God ; and withal, to punish the sloth and negligence of those, who grudge taking any pains to learn God's will and their own duty. This method engages attention ; it avoids all the harshness of reproof, which plain and simpler language would occasion ; it appeals to, and leaves the matter with the sense of the hearers ; and turns off the invidious part, of drawing the parallel, and making the application upon the parties themselves.

These

These were (probably) the reasons, for which our Saviour chose to convey his instructions in parables. We may observe in general, concerning them; first that they have a pleasing variety, suited to men's different apprehensions and capacities; and in the next place, that there is an extraordinary decency, and if (I may so express it) a genteelness, which runs through them all: there is an exact decorum observed in all Christ's parables; and every thing that is spoken, is fitted to the character of the Person who speaks it.

The PARABLES.

S. MATTHEW.

- Cb. xiii. ver. 3.* The *Parable*, of the sower and the seed.
 See *Mark iv. v. 30, Luke vii. v. 4.*
 24. ——— Of the tares.
 31. ——— Of the grain of mustard seed. See
 Mark iv v. 30, Luke xiii v. 19.
 33. ——— Of the eleven See *Luke xiii. v. 21.*
 44. ——— Of the hidden treasure.
 45. ——— Of the merchant, seeking pearls.
 47. ——— Of the net cast into the sea.
Cb. xvii. ver. 23. ——— Of the unmerciful servant.
Cb. xx. ver. 1. ——— Of the labourers in the vineyard.
Cb. xxi. ver. 28. ——— Of the two sons.
 33. ——— Of the husbandmen, who slew the
 heir and possessed the vineyard.
 See *Mark xii. v. 1. Luke xx v. 9.*
Cb. xxii. ver. 2. ——— Of the marriage of the king's son.
Cb. xxv. ver. 1. ——— Of the ten virgins.
 14. ——— Of the talents.

St. MARK.

- Cb. iii. ver. 23.* ——— Of a kingdom divided against itself.

St. LUKE.

- Cb. vii. ver. 41.* ——— Of the two debtors.
Cb. viii. ver. 16. ——— Of the candle under a bushel.
Cb. x. ver. 30. ——— Of the good Samaritan.
Cb. xii. ver. 16. ——— Of the rich man.
Cb. xiii. ver. 6. ——— Of the fig-tree.
Cb. xiv. ver. 6, ——— Of those bidden to a wedding.
 16. ——— Of the great supper.

St.

St. LUKE.

- Cb. xv. ver.* 3. The *Parable*, of the lost sheep.
 8 ——— Of the lost piece of silver.
 11. ——— Of the prodigal son.
Cb. xvi. ver. 1. ——— Of the unjust steward.
 19. ——— Of the rich glutton and *Lazarus*.
Cb. xviii. ver. 2. ——— Of the importunate widow.
 9. ——— Of the Pharisee and Publican.
Cb. xix. ver. 11. ——— Of the unprofitable servant, and
 ten pieces of money.

3. Our Saviour's *Miracles* were not designed for ostentation; nor merely to surprise men, or to gratify their curiosity; but to be really useful and beneficial to mankind. They made way, for the reception of his doctrine; not only, as they were a demonstration, that he who wrought them was a teacher sent from God; but likewise, as they were an argument of our Saviour's own affectionate love and kindness to the sons of men, and a pledge and assurance of God's gracious purposes towards them: and so suitable were they all, to the great design of Christ's coming into the world; that they disposed men, to believe that he, who was the healer of their bodily infirmities, was also best qualified to be the physician of their souls.

We may further consider, the prophets foretold, that the Messiah should come with miracles; and have instanced the particular kinds of miracles, which he wrought; so, that here we have God himself, bearing witness, by the mouth of his prophets, to the truth of our Saviour's miracles; and guarding them, from all suspicion of imposture: all which you may readily find by the following directions.

The MIRACLES.

St MATTHEW.

- Cb. viii. ver.* 3 CHRIST cleanseth the leper. See *Mark*
i. v. 42. Luke v. v. 13.
 13, ——— Healeth the *Centurion's* servant,
 See *Luke vii. v. 10.*
 15 ——— Healeth *Peter's* mother-in-law.
 See *Mark i. v. 31. Luke iv. v.*

39.

A a

St.

St. MATTHEW.

Cb. viii. ver. 16. CHRIST casteth out devils, and healeth the sick. See *Luke iv. v. 40. c. vi. v. 18.*

26. ——— Rebuketh the winds and the sea. See *Mark iv. v. 39. Luke viii. v. 24.*

28. ——— Casteth devils out of two men, which he permitted to enter into the swine. See *Mark v. v. 13. Luke viii. v. 33.*

Cb. ix. ver. 6. ——— Cureth a man, sick of the palsy. See *Mark ii. v. 11. Luke v. v. 24.*

20. ——— Cureth a woman, diseased of an issue of blood twelve years. See *Mark v. 34. Luke viii. 48.*

25. ——— Restoreth *Jairus's* daughter to life. See *Mark v. v. 41. Luke viii. v. 55.*

30. ——— Giveth sight to two blind men.

33. ——— Healeth a dumb man, possessed with a devil. See *Luke xi. v. 14.*

Cb. xii. ver. 13. ——— Restoreth the withered hand. See *Mark iii. v. 5. Luke vi. v. 10.*

22. ——— Healeth one possessed, that was blind and dumb.

Cb. xiv. ver. 20. ——— Feedeth five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes. See *Mark vi. v. 42. Luke 9. v. 17. John vi v. 13.*

25. ——— Walketh on the sea. See *Mark vi. v. 48. John vi. v. 19.*

36. ——— Healeth the sick with the hem of his garment, at *Genesareth*. See *Mark vi. v. 56.*

Cb. xv. ver. 28. ——— Healeth the daughter of the woman of *Canaan*. See *Mark vii. v. 29.*

30. ——— Healeth the lame, blind, dumb, maimed, &c.

St.

St. MATTHEW.

- Cb. xv. ver. 37.* CHRIST feedeth four thousand men besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few little fishes, See *Mark viii. v. 9*
- Cb. xvii. ver. 18* ——— Healeth the lunatick See *Mark ix. v. 26. Luke 9. v. 42. John iv. v. 53.*
27. ——— His miraculous paying of tribute, by money taken out of the fish's mouth.
- Cb. xix. ver. 2.* ——— Healeth the sick.
- Cb. xx. ver. 34* ——— Giveth sight to two blind men.
- Cb. xxi. ver. 14.* ——— Healeth the blind and lame.
19. ——— Curseth the fig-tree. See *Mark xi. v. 14.*

St. MARK.

- Cb. i. ver. 26.* ——— Healeth one, that had a devil, See *Luke iv. v. 35.*
- Cb. vii. ver. 35.* ——— Cureth one deaf, and that had an impediment in his speech.
- Cb. viii. ver. 25.* ——— Restoreth sight to a blind man at *Bethsaida.*
- Cb. ix. ver. 20.* ——— Casteth out a dumb & deaf spirit.
- Cb. x. ver. 52.* ——— Restoreth sight to *Bartimeus.* See *Luke xviii. v. 43.*

St. LUKE.

- Cb. v. ver. 6.* ——— Commands a miraculous draught of fishes.
- Cb. vii. ver. 15.* ——— Raiseth the widow of *Nain's* son from the dead.
- Cb. xiii. ver. 13.* ——— Healeth a woman who had been infirm eighteen years.
- Cb. xiv. ver. 4.* ——— Healeth one of the dropsey.
- Cb. xvii. ver. 14.* ——— Healeth ten lepers.
- Cb. xxii. ver. 51.* ——— Healeth *Malchus's* ear.

St. JOHN.

- Cb. ii. ver. 8.* ——— Turneth water into wine.
- Cb. v. ver. 8.* ——— Cureth the man at the pool of *Bethesda.*
- Cb. ix. ver. 7.* ——— Cureth a man born blind.
- Cb. xi. ver. 44.* ——— Raiseth *Lazarus* from the dead.

4. *Our Saviour's manner of life and conversation.* He practised first himself, what he taught to others; and laid no burthens upon his disciples, but what he willingly underwent himself: wherein he was their pattern, as well as their director. He was one intire instance of all eminent virtues: he made it his meat and drink, to do the will of him that sent him; he went about doing good, and healing both the bodies and souls of men: he submitted to the lowest offices, for the sake of others; and was at every body's service, that desired his assistance: he condescended to the meanest company, that of publicans and sinners, when he had a prospect of doing any good upon them; and was content, to lose the reputation of being a good man, that he might more effectually serve the ends of piety and goodness. So much goodness never met with such ungrateful and unsuitable returns: yet this did not discourage him, from going on, as he had begun: he still continued unwearied in well-doing, endeavouring to conquer men's malice by kindness, and overcome evil with good. This eminent example, of humility and a patient submission to God's will, of charity and a contempt of the world; which are the peculiar doctrines of the christian religion, and were never (until then) effectually recommended to the world, and which are so conspicuous in every part of our Saviour's life; is of great efficacy, to persuade us to go and do likewise.

5. *The circumstances of our Saviour's death.* In great humility he took upon him the form of a servant, and submitted to a servile and ignominious death, and was numbered among the transgressors; he gave the greatest demonstration of his charity, in dying even for his enemies; and offering up his blood, as well as his prayers, to procure a pardon for those who shed it. How tender his affections were towards his friends and followers, fully appears from his last discourses, wherewith he took his leave of his disciples; recorded, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of *St. John*: a portion of scripture, which we cannot too often read and consider: so full it is, of excellent advice and heavenly consolation. This we may call the last sermon of our dying Lord, which we ought to lay up in our minds, as the pledge of his love, and our own security. When our Lord had, in so affection-

ate a manner, performed all the tenderest offices of the kindest master and the best friend; he absolutely resigned himself to the will of his Father, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross! Thus hath Our Saviour given us an example, both how *to live*, and how *to die*: and, if we follow this glorious pattern, which he hath set us; neither death, nor life, will be able to separate us from him. Therefore, says the apostle, "Take heed, that ye despise not him, that speaks to you in the holy Gospels: for if they escaped not, who despised him that spake on earth; how shall we escape, if we turn away from him that speaks to us from heaven?" For this end, therefore, I have added the following particulars; that you may the more readily improve, in the knowledge of the great mysteries and duties, recorded in these holy books.

St. MATTHEW.

This gospel contains an history of the birth, life, miracles, death, and resurrection of *Jesus*: all which most necessary truths must be known and believed.

The genealogy of <i>Christ</i> , c.	<i>Christ's</i> sermon on the mount, c. 5, 6, 7.
1. v. 1. See <i>Luke</i> 3. v. 23.	—Teacheth to pray, c. 6. v. 5.
His incarnation, c. 1. v. 18.	—To give alms, c. 6. v. 1.
See <i>Luke</i> c. 1. v. 35.	—To fast, c. 6. v. 16.
Visited by the wise men, c. 2. v. 1.	—Reproveth rash judgment, c. 7. v. 2.
The murder of the innocents, c. 2. v. 16.	The names of the apostles, c. 10. v. 2.
The preaching, &c. of <i>John</i> the <i>Baptist</i> , c. 3. v. 1.	Their commission, c. 10. v. 1. See <i>Mark</i> 6. v. 7. <i>Luke</i> 9. v. 1.
See <i>Mark</i> 1. v. 4.	<i>Christ's</i> testimony concerning <i>John</i> , c. 11. v. 7.
<i>Christ's</i> baptism, c. 3. v. 13.	The blasphemy against the <i>Holy Ghost</i> , c. 12. v. 31.
See <i>Mark</i> 1. v. 9.	
—Fasting and temptation, c. 4. v. 1. See <i>Mark</i> 1. v. 12.	
—Calling of his apostles, c. 4. v. 18. See <i>Mark</i> 1. v. 16.	

- Death of *John the Baptist*, c. 14. v. 6. See *Mark* 6. v. 27.
- Christ* condemneth the traditions of the *Pharisees*, c. 15. v. 3.
- Peter's* confession of faith, c. 16. v. 16.
- Christ's* transfiguration, c. 17. v. 1. See *Mark* 9. v. 2.
- Teacheth forgiveness and mercy, c. 18. v. 21.
- Humility and meekness, c. 19. v. 15.
- The danger of riches, c. 19. v. 23.
- Christ* rideth into *Jerusalem* on an ass, c. 21. v. 1.
- Driveth buyers and sellers out of the temple, c. 21. v. 12.
- The calling of the *Gentiles*, c. 22. v. 9.
- Christ* proves the resurrection of the dead, c. 22. v. 23.
- The first and great commandment, c. 22. v. 36.
- The signs of *Christ's* coming to judgment, c. 24. v. 29.
- Of the destruction of the temple, c. 24. v. 1.
- A description of the last judgment, c. 25. v. 31.
- Judas* betrays *Christ*, c. 26. v. 14, & 47.
- Christ* eateth the *Passover*, c. 26. v. 17.
- Instituteth the *Lord's Supper*, c. 26. v. 26.
- Is denied by *Peter*, c. 26. v. 69. See *Mark* 14. v. 66.
- Delivered to *Pilate*, c. 27. v. 2.
- Crowned with thorns, c. 27. v. 29.
- Crucified, c. 27. v. 35.
- Dieth, c. 27. v. 50.
- Is buried, c. 27. v. 59.
- Judas* hangeth himself, c. 27. v. 3. See *Acts* 1.
- Christ's* resurrection, c. 28. v. 1.
- Sendeth his disciples, to baptize, and preach to all nations, c. 28. v. 19. See *Luke* c. 24. v. 47.

St. M A R K.

St. Mark was the disciple and companion of *St. Peter*; and some affirm, that this gospel of our Saviour's life and death was dictated to him by *St. Peter*, and indited by the Holy Ghost.

- The character of *St. John the Baptist*, c. 1. v. 2. c. 6. v. 20.
- Christ* sheweth, what divorcement is lawful, c. 10. v. 2.
- Christ* exhorteth us, to watch and pray, c. 13. v. 33.
- Ascendeth into heaven, c. 16. v. 19. See *Luke* c. 24. v. 51. *Acts* c. 1. v. 9.
- Herod's*

Herod's value for the *Baptist*, c. 6. v. 26. | The *Baptist's* suffering, c. 6. v. 27. See *Luke* c. 3. v. 20.

St. L U K E.

This gospel, written by St. *Luke*, the physician and beloved companion of St. *Paul*, by the special direction and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, was dedicated by him to *Theophilus*, who was an honourable senator, or a renowned person in the church.

The conception of *John* the *Baptist*, c. 1 v. 5. | *Christ* preacheth against hypocrisy, c. 12. v. 1.

The angel's salutation to the virgin *Mary*; and the humble manner, in which she received the divine message, c. 1. v. 26. | —Covetousness, c. 12. v. 13.

John the *Baptist's* nativity and circumcision, c. 1. v. 57. | —Preacheth repentance, c. 13. v. 1.

The birth of *Christ*, c. 2. v. 6. | —Humility, c. 14. v. 7.

—Made known to the shepherds, c. 2. v. 8. | *Zaccheus*, the publican, c. 19. v. 1.

—His circumcision, c. 2. v. 21. | *Christ's* bloody sweat, c. 22. v. 44.

The purification of the Virgin *Mary*, c. 2. v. 22. | *Jesus* sent to *Herod*, c. 23. v. 7.

Christ, disputing with the doctors in the temple, c. 2. v. 46. * | *Barabbas*, set free, c. 23. v. 25.

The victory, obtained by *Christ*, c. 4. v. 1. | *Christ* crucified between two thieves, c. 23 v. 39.

The *Centurion's* faith, c. 7. v. 1. | The penitent thief's request, c. 23. v. 40. and our Saviour's most encouraging answer to that petition, (admirable for the FAITH, which appears in it) is a matter of the greatest comfort, to a returning and sincerely repenting sinner.

The conversion of *Mary Magdalen*, c. 7. v. 36. | *Christ* appears to two disciples, in the road to *Emmaus*, c. 24 v. 13.

Christ sendeth out seventy disciples, c. 10. v. 1. | —To the apostles, c. 24. v. 36.

—Teacheth the way of salvation, c. 10. v. 25. | —Promiseth the Holy Ghost, c. 24. v. 49.

—Reprehendeth *Martha*, &c. c. 10. v. 41. |

St. J O H N.

The writer of this gospel was the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of *Christ*: the occasion of it was the heresy of *Ebion* and *Cerintbus*, which denied the divinity of *Jesus Christ*. The design of this gospel is, to describe the person of *Christ* in his divine and human nature, as the object of our faith. The other Evangelists prove him to be truly Man: this proves him to be God, as well as Man. They relate, what *Christ* did; St. *John* reports, what *Christ* said: they recount his miracles; he records his sermons and prayers; whereby he unfolds the profound mysteries of our holy religion.

The divinity, humanity and office of <i>Christ</i> , c. 1. v. 1.	ence, c. 14. v. 15. c. 15. v. 1.
The testimony of <i>John</i> the Baptist, c. 1. v. 15.	<i>Christ</i> promises the Holy Ghost, c. 14. v. 16. c. 16. v. 1.
<i>Christ</i> teacheth <i>Nicodemus</i> the necessity of regeneration c. 3. v. 1.	The office of the Holy Ghost, c. 15. v. 26.
—Talketh with the woman of <i>Samaria</i> , c. 4. v. 1.	How our prayers shall be acceptable, c. 16. v. 23.
—Reproveth the <i>Jews</i> , c. 5. v. 17.	<i>Christ</i> 's prayer to God the father, c. 17. v. 1.
—Is the bread of life, c. 6. v. 32.	—His kingdom, c. 18. v. 36.
—Acquitteth the adulteress brought before him, c. 8. v. 3.	—Is scourged, and crowned with thorns, &c. c. 19. v. 1.
—Is the light of the world, c. 8. v. 12.	Lots cast for his garments, c. 19. v. 23.
—Is the door, and good shepherd, c. 10. v. 1.	<i>Christ</i> 's side is pierced, c. 19. v. 34.
—Proves his divinity by his works, c. 10. v. 25.	By whom <i>Christ</i> was buried, c. 19. v. 38.
—Washeth his disciples feet. c. 13. v. 1.	The unbelief and confession of <i>Thomas</i> , c. 20. v. 24.
—Exhorteth, to patience, prayer, love and obedi-	How known to his disciples, after his resurrection, c. 21. v. 1.

His

His commands to <i>Peter</i> , c. 12. v. 15.	<i>Peter's</i> death, c. 21. v. 18.
Foretelleth the manner of	Rebuketh <i>John's</i> curiosity, c. 21. v. 22.

The A C T S.

II. This book recommends, to our observation and imitation, the lives and actions of the holy Apostles, particularly *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*; and acquaints us, with their zeal and diligence in planting and propagating christianity, not only in *Judea* and *Samaria*, but also in *Syria*, *Asia*, and *Macedonia*; and even in *Rome* itself: It contains an ecclesiastical history, of the first and purest churches; how they were planted and watered, gathered and propagated, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and how the christian church obeyed *Christ's* commands to his *Apostles*, both in matters of faith, worship, communion, and government; that the primitive church might be an exemplary pattern therein to succeeding churches throughout all ages. Again, this history gives all the ministers of the gospel a great and noble pattern, of ministerial diligence, faithfulness, and prudence; acquainting us, what the Apostles did; the pains they took, and the hazards they ran, in preaching the glad tidings of salvation; how they instructed the ignorant, reduced the wandering, bore with the weakness of some, and patiently contended with the obstinacy and perverseness of others.

Moreover, this apostolical book relates several passages, which confirm the truth of the Gospels; such as, the testimony, which the apostles gave to the life, doctrine, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of *Christ*; exactly agreeing with that account of each particular, which we find in the Gospels; how they all of them joined in giving their testimony, and persisted in it; notwithstanding all the evils, which either threatened them, or were actually inflicted upon them; as will more fully appear on the perusal of the following particulars.

<i>Matthias</i> , chosen to be an Apostle, c. 1. v. 26.	The Apostles work miracles, c. 3. v. 41. c. 5. v. 1.
The descent of the <i>Holy Ghost</i> , c. 2. v. 1.	An exhortation to repentance, c. 3. v. 19.
	A a 5 The

- The imprisonment of *Peter* and *John*, c. 4. v. 1. c. 5. v. 17.
- The punishment of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, c. 5. v. 5.
- The office of deacon appointed, c. 6. v. 3.
- The history of St. *Stephen*, c. 6. v. 8. c. 7. v. 1.
- Simon*, the forcerer, c. 8. v. 9.
- Philip* converteth the *Eunuch*, c. 8. v. 26.
- Saul* persecuteth the church, c. 7. v. 58. c. 9. v. 1.
- Saul* is converted, c. 9. v. 4. See c. 22. & 1 *Tim.* c. 1. v. 12.
- Peter* healeth *Eneas*, c. 9. v. 34.
- Raileth *Tabitha* to life, c. 9. v. 36.
- Cornelius* converted, c. 10. v. 1.
- Peter's* defence, for going to the *Gentiles*, c. 11. v. 1.
- The beginning of the name of *Christians*, c. 11. v. 26.
- James* killed, c. 12. v. 2.
- Peter* imprisoned escapes, c. 12. v. 3.
- King *Herod* the persecutor, eaten to death by worms, c. 12. v. 23.
- Paul* and *Barnabas*, sent to the *Gentiles*, c. 13. v. 1.
- Sergius Paulus*, and *Elymas* the forcerer, c. 13. v. 7.
- The *Gentiles* converted, c. 13. v. 42. See *Ephes.* c. 3. v. 1.
- Paul* and *Barnabas*, persecuted at *Icenium*, c. 14. v. 1.
- Paul* cureth a cripple, c. 14. v. 8.
- Great dissention about circumcision, c. 15. v. 1.
- Paul* and *Barnabas* at variance, c. 15. v. 39.
- Timothy* circumcised, c. 16. v. 1.
- The conversion of *Lydia*, c. 16. v. 14.
- Paul* casteth out a spirit of divination, c. 16. v. 16.
- The conversion of the jaylor, c. 16. v. 26.
- Paul* preacheth at *Thessalonica*, c. 17. v. 1. See 1 *Thess.* c. 2. v. 1.
- At *Berea*, c. 17. v. 10.
- At *Athens*, in the *Areopagus*; about the worship of the true God, the resurrection, and day of judgment, c. 17. v. 19.
- At *Corinth*, c. 18. v. 1.
- Is accused before *Gallio*, c. 18. v. 12.
- Apollos* preacheth, c. 18. v. 24.
- Paul* conferreth the *Holy Ghost*, c. 19. v. 6.
- Demetrius* raiseth a tumult, c. 19. v. 24.
- Paul* in *Macedonia*, c. 20. v. 1.
- Eutychus's* death and revival, c. 20. v. 9.
- Paul* at *Miletus*, c. 20. v. 17.

Philip's

<i>Philip's daughters prophesy,</i>	<i>Paul's discourse with Agrip-</i>
<i>c. 21. v. 9.</i>	<i>pa, c. 25. v. 23. c. 26. v.</i>
<i>Paul comes to Jerusalem, c.</i>	<i>1.</i>
<i>21. v. 17.</i>	<i>—Is declared innocent, c.</i>
<i>—Is seized and rescued, c.</i>	<i>25. v. 25.</i>
<i>21, v. 27.</i>	<i>—Is sent to Rome, c. 27.</i>
<i>—Declares himself a Roman</i>	<i>—Suffers shipwreck, but is</i>
<i>citizen, c. 22. v. 25.</i>	<i>saved, c. 27. v. 41. A</i>
<i>—Pleadeth his cause, c. 23.</i>	<i>great encouragement to</i>
<i>v. 1. c. 24. v. 10.</i>	<i>Christians, to depend on</i>
<i>—How delivered from mur</i>	<i>God in the greatest diffi-</i>
<i>der, c. 23. v. 16.</i>	<i>culties and dangers of this</i>
<i>—Is accused by Tertullus, c.</i>	<i>mortal life.</i>
<i>24. v. 1.</i>	<i>—Is kindly entertained by</i>
<i>—How treated by Felix, c.</i>	<i>the Barbarians, c. 28. v.</i>
<i>24. v. 24.</i>	<i>1.</i>
<i>—Accused before Festus, c.</i>	<i>—Healeth diseases, c. 28.</i>
<i>25. v. 2.</i>	<i>v. 8.</i>
<i>—His answer, c. 25. v. 8.</i>	<i>—His arrival at Rome, c. 28.</i>
<i>—Appeals to Cæsar, c. 25.</i>	<i>v. 16.</i>
<i>v. 11.</i>	

The EPISTLES.

III. All the considerable passages, related in the Gospels and in the Acts, are likewise abundantly confirmed by the *Epistles*. The particulars of our Saviour's life and death are often referred to in them, as grounded upon the undoubted testimony of eye-witnesses, and being the foundation of the christian religion: and the speedy propagation of the christian faith, recorded in the *Acts*, is confirmed (beyond all contradiction) by innumerable passages in the *Epistles*, written to the churches already planted. The doctrinal parts of the *Epistles* deserve our best attention: and although most of them were written upon particular occasions, and with relation to the (then) present exigencies of the churches, to which they are directed; yet you may find the apostles take occasion, from every hint that is offered to them, to explain the mysteries of the gospel, to set forth the excellency of it, and to persuade men to live up to the height of its precepts. They descend, to particular directions for discharging the duties relating

relating to all states and conditions of life ; those of princes and subjects, of pastors and people, of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of masters and servants, &c.

R O M A N S.

This Epistle has always been esteemed one of the chiefest and most excellent portions of scripture ; shewing, that neither the *Gentiles* by the law of nature, nor the *Jews* by the law of *Moses*, could ever attain to justification and salvation, without faith in *Jesus Christ*; and, that *Faith* is not separated from *Good-Works*, but productive of them. In the *first eleven* chapters, the Apostle treats of *justification by Faith* alone, without the works of the law ; of original corruption by the fall of *Adam* ; of *sanctification* by the spirit of *Christ* ; of the calling of the *Gentiles*: and, in the *12th and following* chapters, we have many useful and excellent exhortations, both to general and particular duties, respecting *God*, our *neighbour*, and *ourselves*; and several encouragements given us, to the love and practice of universal Holiness.

The sins of the <i>Gentiles</i> , c. 1. v. 21.	Predestination, c. 9. v. 18. c. 11. v. 7.
Whom circumcision profiteth, c. 2. v. 25.	The difference, between the law and faith, c. 10. v. 1.
The <i>Jews</i> prerogative, c. 3. v. 1.	Self-conceit, condemned, c. 12. v. 3.
Justification is by faith alone, c. 3. v. 20. c. 4. v. 5. <i>Gal.</i> c. 3. v. 6. See <i>James</i> , c. 2. v. 14.	Love &c. required of us, c. 12. v. 9.
We may not live in sin, c. 6. v. 1.	Revenge, forbidden, c. 12. v. 19.
The law is holy, just, and good, c. 7. v. 12.	Duty to magistrates, c. 13. v. 1. See 1 <i>Pet.</i> c. 2. v. 13.
Who are free from condemnation, c. 8. v. 1.	Gluttony and drunkenness, condemned, c. 13. v. 11.
Of God's decrees, c. 8. v. 29. c. 9. v. 18. c. 11. v. 7.	Of things indifferent, c. 14. v. 1.
	Give no offence, c. 14. v. 13.

Read

Read also the 1st chapter at the 4th verse, concerning our Lord's resurrection; the 20th, concerning the knowledge of God by the <i>light of nature</i> ; and the	8th chapter, concerning the influence and assist- ance of the Holy Spirit, the death, resurrection, and intercession of our Lord.
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The First of CORINTHIANS.

Corinth was a very large and wealthy city; but infamous for pride and luxury, wantonness and uncleanness. The occasion of this epistle was the people's preferring one preacher before another; some crying up *Paul*, other *Apollus*, &c. Wherefore St. *Paul* sharply reproves both their erroneous opinions, and vicious practices; and rebukes them, for their schisms and divisions, confusion and disorders, in public assemblies; for their prophanation of the Lord's Supper, toleration of incest, and going to law before heathen magistrates: He asserts the ministers maintenance, the excellence of spiritual gifts, the nature and necessity of charity; and confirms the doctrine of the Resurrection.

The commendation of preaching, c. 1. v. 18. & c. 2. <i>Christ</i> , the only foundation, c. 3. v. 7. How to esteem ministers, c. 4. v. 1. See 1 <i>Tim.</i> c. 5. v. 17. Of going to law, c. 6. v. 1. Of marriage, c. 7. v. 1. & 35. Every man must be content in his station, c. 7. v. 20. Of virginity, c. 7. v. 25. Of scandal, c. 8. v. 1. A minister ought to live by the gospel, c. 9. v. 7. Of preparation to the Lord's	table, c. 10. v. 21. c. 11. v. 20. Of behaviour at church, c. 11. v. 1. Of spiritual gifts, c. 12. v. 1. The excellency of charity, c. 13. v. 1. Of prophecy, c. 14. v. 1. Women forbidden to preach, c. 14. v. 34. See 1 <i>Tim.</i> c. 2. v. 11. The resurrection of the dead, proved; and the manner, in which our bodies shall be raised, c. 15. v. 1. The duty of the Lord's day, c. 16. v. 2.
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The

The Second of CORINTHIANS.

In this epistle *St. Paul* confounds his adversaries, by a new way of arguing; namely by boasting of his sufferings, and glorying in them: he displays his calamities, blazons his crosses; and rehearses the good services he had done, and the great sufferings he had undergone for the sake of *Christ* and his holy religion.

A consolation in all afflictions, c. 1. v. 3. See <i>James</i> c. 1. v. 2.	Whose company must be avoided, c. 6. v. 14.
The excellency of the New Testament above the Old, c. 3. v. 12.	An exhortation to charity, c. 8. v. 1. c. 9. v. 6.
<i>Paul's</i> diligence and troubles, c. 4. v. 1.	Of our spiritual warfare, c. 10. v. 3.
Who is in <i>Christ</i> , c. 5. v. 1.	<i>Paul's</i> equality with the chief apostles, c. 11. v. 5.
	An exhortation to repentance, c. 13. v. 5.

GALATIANS.

Some false Apostles from *Judea*, having crept in among the *Galatians*, taught the necessity of christians submitting to circumcision, and the observation of the *Mosaical* institution: to them, *St. Paul* writes this epistle; proving, that he was called to be an Apostle, by *Christ* himself; that his doctrine was conformable to, and the very same with, what was preached by the other Apostles; and that circumcision, and all the ceremonial rites, were abolished by the death of *Christ*.

An account of <i>Paul's</i> dispute with <i>Peter</i> , c. 2. v. 11.	The works of the <i>flesh</i> , and fruits of the <i>spirit</i> , c. 5. v. 19.
<i>Christians</i> , free from the law, c. 4. v. 1.	In what <i>Christians</i> ought to glory, c. 6. v. 14.

EPHESIANS.

St. Paul, being a prisoner at *Rome*, writes this epistle to the churches of *Christ* in and about *Ephesus*, the metropolis of *Asia*. In the three first chapters, he treats, of the sublime

lime principles of our election, vocation, justification, and adoption; in the three last chapters, he exhorts them, to constancy in the faith; to preparation for, and patience under, sufferings; and to live religiously in every relation, as husbands and wives, as parents and children, as masters and servants.

Of election and adoption, c. 1. v. 4.	The duty of children, c. 6. v. 1.
We are made for good works, c. 2. v. 1. See <i>James</i> , c. 2. v. 14.	—Of servants, c. 6. v. 5. 1 <i>Tim.</i> c. 6 v. 1. See <i>Titus</i> c. 2. v. 9. 1 <i>Pet.</i> c. 2. v. 18.
How we should live, c. 2. v. 11. c. 4. v. 18. c. 5. v. 1.	The defence of a <i>Christian</i> , c. 6. v. 13.
An exhortation to unity, &c. c. 4. v. 1. See <i>Philip</i> , c. 2. v. 1.	In the same 6th chapter you have a relation of that whole armour, which every good christian stands in need of, to resist the wiles of the devil, in time of temptation.
The duty of wives, c. 5. v. 22. See 1 <i>Pet.</i> c. 3. v. 1.	
—Of husbands, c. 5. v. 25. See 1 <i>Pet.</i> c. 3. v. 7.	

PHILIPPIANS.

Philippi was a principal city of *Macedonia*; whose christian inhabitants having supplied the apostle's wants in his imprisonment at *Rome*, St. *Paul* sends this affectionate letter to them: partly to testify his thankfulness, for the relief received from them, but principally to confirm them in the faith, to prevent their being offended at his sufferings for the gospel, to encourage them to walk worthy of the gospel, to warn them against seducers and judaizing teachers, and to quicken them to divers christian duties.

A caution, against false teachers, c. 3. v. 2 See <i>Coloss.</i> c. 2. v. 8. See 2 <i>Pet.</i> c. 2. v. 10. 1 <i>John</i> , c. 2.	v. 18. c. 4. v. 1. & <i>Jude.</i>
	An exhortation to prayer and trust in God, c. 4. v. 6.

COLOSSIANS.

The *Colossians* were the church of the christians, in and about the city of *Colosse* in *Phrygia*; who were infested with jud-

judaizing doctors, who thought to impose upon them circumcision, and the observation of the ceremonial law; or such persons, as, being converted from Gentilism to Christianity, would have obtruded upon them their philosophical speculations, and some of their heathenish practices, particularly their worshipping of angels: *St. Paul* therefore writes this epistle, to shew the former, that Christians are under no obligation to observe circumcision, or any part of the ceremonial law; and to convince the latter, that *Christ* (and not angels) was appointed the Mediator between God and man: and that we, being reconciled to God by him, through him only have access unto God in all our necessities.

We must be constant in	An exhortation, to put off
<i>Christ</i> , c. 2. v. 1.	the old man, c. 3. v. 10.
A condemnation of false	—To charity, c. 3. v. 14.
worship, c. 2 v. 18.	—To fervent prayer, c. 4.
How to see <i>Christ</i> , c. 3. v.	v. 1.
1.	—To avoid scandal, c. 4 v.
An exhortation to mortifica-	5.
tion, c. 3. v. 5.	

The First of THESSALONIANS.

Thessalonica was the chief city of *Macedonia*, where *St. Paul* very early laid the foundation of a christian church; which consisting partly of Jews and partly of *Gentiles*, was severely persecuted by both. The Apostle therefore writes this epistle, to inform them, 'that it was nothing strange, they should thus suffer from those Jews and Pagans, who had killed the *Lord Jesus*, and their own prophets, and were contrary to all men;' to remind them of the transcendent reward laid up for them, and the severe punishments prepared for their persecutors: and to encourage them, by the example of his own constancy, to persevere in their holy profession.

An exhortation to godliness,	4. v. 16. c. 5. v. 1.
c. 4. v. 1.	Rules of <i>Christian</i> practice,
Of the resurrection, and se-	c. 5. v. 14.
cond coming of <i>Christ</i> , c.	The

The Second to the THESSALONIANS.

St. *Paul*, in this epistle, congratulates their constancy, in the profession of the gospel; and exhorts them, to grow in grace. He rectifies a mistake, concerning the coming of *Christ* to judgment; as if that day were then at hand, when it was very far off: and commends to them divers christian duties; requiring them, to admonish and censure such idle persons, as did not work, but lived upon other men's labours.

Of *Antichrist*, c. 2. v. 3.

The First to TIMOTHY.

Timothy is the name of the person, to whom St. *Paul* directs this and the following epistle. He became, first the disciple, then the companion of St. *Paul*; and was ordained by him: and as he had entered very young into the work of the ministry, St. *Paul* thought fit (in his absence from him) to write two epistles to him, and to all succeeding ministers of the gospel after him; directing them, how to demean and behave themselves in their ministerial function.

Of the right use and end of the law, c. 1. v. 5.	Rules, to be observed in re-proving, c. 5. v. 1. See <i>James</i> , c. 3. v. 1.
The duty of prayer, c. 2. v. 1.	A direction concerning widows, c. 5. v. 3.
Of the dress of women, c. 2. v. 9.	—Concerning health, c. 5. v. 23.
The virtue of child-bearing, c. 2. v. 15.	—Concerning new teachers, c. 6. v. 5.
The qualifications of bishops, c. 3. v. 1.	An admonition to teachers, c. 6. v. 2. See 2 <i>Tim.</i> c. 2. v. 1. & 22. c. 3. v. 1.
—Of deacons, c. 3. v. 8.	c. 4. v. 1. <i>Titus</i> , c. 1. v. 6. c. 3. v. 1. 1 <i>Pet.</i> c. 5. v. 1.
A prophecy of heresies, c. 4. v. 1. See 2 <i>Pet.</i> c. 2. v. 1.	

The Second to TIMOTHY.

The design of this epistle is, to forewarn *Timothy* against those hereticks, seducers, and false teachers, then arising and

and creeping into the church ; to excite him to the utmost care and diligence, in the faithful discharge of his office ; and to exhort him, to prepare for sufferings and persecutions.

The enemies of the truth, <i>c.</i> 3. <i>v.</i> 6. See <i>Titus</i> , <i>c.</i> 1. <i>v.</i> 10.	Of <i>Alexander</i> the copper-smith, <i>c.</i> 4. <i>v.</i> 14. The duty of all <i>Christians</i> , <i>c.</i> 2. <i>v.</i> 12.
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T I T U S.

Titus was a Gentile, converted early to christianity by *St. Paul* ; who left him in *Crete*, to govern the church in that island ; and, in this epistle, instructs him in all the parts of his duty, in electing church governors, in censuring false teachers, in instructing the ancient and younger persons ; and in pressing upon all persons, obedience to magistrates, and a care to maintain good works.

How ministers of <i>Christ</i> should be qualified, <i>c.</i> 1. <i>v.</i> 6.	Directions, for a minister's doctrine and life, <i>c.</i> 2. <i>v.</i> 1. & <i>c.</i> 3. <i>v.</i> 1.
Of evil teachers, <i>c.</i> 1. <i>v.</i> 10.	

P H I L E M O N.

St Paul had converted *Onesimus* ; who had run away from his master *Philemon*, and carried off part of his master's substance : after some time, being informed thereof, the Apostle sends him back to his master ; earnestly desiring him, to pardon him, and to receive him into his favour.

H E B R E W S.

The persons stiled *Hebrews*, to whom this epistle is directed, were the believing *Jews* converted to *Christianity* ; who, though they had embraced the gospel, yet adhered to the *Mosaic* rites and *Jewish* ceremonies, joining them with *Christianity*, as necessary to salvation.

The general design of this epistle is, to inform the *Hebrews*, ' that the gospel dispensation, under the New Testament of *Jesus Christ*, far surpasseth and excelleth ' the ministry of the Old Testament, under *Moses* and the ' prophets : ' and to prove, ' that *Christ* was greater than ' the

‘ the angels, a greater person and law-giver than *Moses*,
 ‘ a greater priest than *Aaron*, a greater prince than *Mel-*
 ‘ *chisedeck*; and that the *Levitical* priesthood, and old co-
 ‘ venant, were to give place to *Christ*, our great high
 ‘ priest; and to the new covenant, established upon bet-
 ‘ ter promises.’

The excellency of <i>Jesus</i>	How inferior to the <i>Christ-</i>
<i>Christ</i> , above all creatures,	<i>tian</i> sacrifice, c. 9. v. 11.
c. 1. v. 4. c. 3. v. 2. c.	c. 10. v. 10.
5. v. 1. c. 7. v. 2.	What faith is, c. 11. v. 1.
Why we ought to be obedi-	See <i>James</i> , c. 2. v. 14.
ent to him, c. 2. v. 1. c.	Its necessity, c. 11. v. 6.
3. v. 7.	Its fruits in the ancient fa-
Eternal happiness, how at-	thers, c. 11. v. 7.
tained, c. 4. v. 11.	An exhortation to patience,
An exhortation to stedfast-	from the example of our
ness in faith, c. 6. v. 1. c.	Lord; the advantages of
10. v. 19. c. 12. v. 1.	affliction, and the necessi-
<i>Christ</i> a priest, c. 7. v. 1.	ty of peace and holiness,
The <i>Levitical</i> priesthood,	c. 12.
how abolished, c. 8. v. 1.	The <i>New Testament</i> , pre-
The <i>temporal</i> covenant, how	ferable to the <i>Old</i> , c. 12.
abolished, c. 8. v. 7.	v. 22.
A description of the rites	Several godly admonitions,
and sacrifices of the law,	c. 13. v. 1.
c. 9. v. 1. c. 10. v. 1.	

J A M E S.

The author of this epistle was St. *James*, commonly
 called *James the Less*; and our Lord's brother, the son of
Alpheus stiled also *James the Just*, and bishop of *Jerusa-*
lem. The design of it is, to establish the *Christian Jews*
 in a well ordered religious course of life, to fortify them
 against suffering from the unbelieving *Jews*, and to cor-
 rect a pernicious error about the sufficiency of a naked
 Faith; for St. *James* shews us, ‘ that it is not the bare
 ‘ belief and profession of the *Christian* Faith, but the
 ‘ power and practical improvement of it, that must make
 ‘ or render it saving to us.’

An exhortation to patience,	How to be truly religious, c.
c. 1. v. 2. c. 5. v. 7. 1	1. v. 26.
<i>Pet</i> c. 2. v. 13.	We

We must not respect persons,	Of contention, &c. c. 4. v. 1.
c. 2. v. 1.	— Evil-speaking, c. 4. v. 11.
Our faith, how to be en-	— Submission to God's will,
livened, c. 2. v. 14.	c. 4. v. 13.
The faith of devils, c. 2. v. 19.	— God's vengeance, c. 5. v. 1.
Of the government of the	— Prayer, c. 5. v. 13. & 15.
tongue, c. 3. v. 5.	— Confession, c. 5. v. 16.
Of godly wisdom, c. 3. v. 13.	— Swearing, c. 5. v. 12.

The First of P E T E R.

St. *Peter* writes this epistle, to the believing *Jews* and profelyted *Gentiles*, dispersed and scattered abroad in divers countries; to confirm them in the *Christian* religion, to encourage them to constancy under the sharpest persecutions and fiery trials for the same, and to excite them to the practice of particular duties incumbent upon them in every capacity and relation.

An exhortation to godly con-	on we are built, c. 2. v.
versation, c. 1. v. 13. c	4.
4. v. 1.	An address to the clergy, c.
<i>Christ</i> the foundation, where-	5. v. 1.

The Second of P E T E R.

St. *Peter* writes this second epistle, to the new-converted *Jews* of the dispersion, scattered through *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*, and *Bithynia*; to warn them of the fiery trial, that sharp and bitter persecution, which was coming upon them; to establish and settle them, to strengthen and confirm them.

An exhortation to faith and	stroyed, c. 3. v. 10.
works, c. 1. v. 5.	The end of all things, &c.
How the world shall be de-	c. 3. v. 3.

The First of J O H N.

St. *John* wrote this epistle, a little before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; to arm the *Jewish* converts against those loose doctrines, 'that Faith without Works could be sufficient to salvation; that men might be children of the light, and yet walk in darkness; the favourites of God, without obedience to his laws, or love to his children or servants:' and partly to fortify them, against the

the impious errors of the *Gnosticks*, who pretended to extraordinary measures of knowledge and divine illuminations.

The person of <i>Christ</i> described, c. 1. v. 1, &c. an illustrious testimony to the <i>Christian</i> religion, and the denial of sinless perfection.	How to know God, c. 2. v. 3. Of love to one another, c. 3. v. 11. c. 4. v. 7. <i>Jesus</i> is able to save us, c. 5. v. 9.
A consolation, against the sins of infirmity, c. 2. v. 1.	<i>Three Persons</i> in the God-head, c. 5. v. 7.

J U D E.

The design of this epistle appears to be, to fortify the *Christian Jews* against the errors and corruptions of those seducers; who, by their wicked lives and worse doctrines, attempted to seduce persons from the plainness and simplicity of the gospel, and to bring upon them the same condemnation and judgment with themselves.

This agrees with the <i>second</i> epistle of St. <i>Peter</i> : and, besides the terrible examples of God's wrath, it has that ancient prophecy of <i>Enoch</i> concerning the	day of judgment; which is fitted, to awaken the most secure and careless sinners to a thorough repentance.
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☞ Now, if we take a view of the manners and behaviour of the primitive *Christians*, as they are described in the *Acts* and the *Epistles*; we may draw such a portraiture of that first and purest church, as will at once ravish us with delight and admiration, at the sight of its beauties and perfections; and strike us with shame and confusion, when we find, how much we are degenerated from the virtues of our fore-fathers. Their constancy and patience in suffering for the testimony of the gospel, their unwearyed labours in publishing it, their hearty concern for the good success of their ministry, their renouncing all self-interests and worldly considerations, and seeking nothing but the honour of God and the good of men's souls, are remarkably recorded in the history of the *Acts*, or in their *Epistles*. The virtues and graces, which shine forth in every

every part of the apostolical writings, are alone a demonstration, that the doctrine, which they taught, came from God, the fountain of truth and holiness.

The REVELATION of JOHN *the Divine*.

The title of this book is the *Revelation*; so called, because it contains a general discovery of such secrets, as no wisdom of man could have manifested or foreseen; and in particular reveals such divine things, concerning the state of the church, as before lay hid in the purpose and council of God.

IV. This book, on many accounts, may be reckoned one of the obscurest among all the prophetic writings; but an ordinary reader may receive great edification, from the divine songs, offered up there to God and *Christ*; and may likewise discover very useful truths frequently recommended in it: such, as the adoration of the One supreme God, in opposition to all creature worship; the relying upon the merits of *Christ* only, for pardon, sanctification, and salvation; that we ought to wait patiently, for *Christ's* appearing and his kingdom; and, in an earnest expectation of it, to continue stedfast in the profession of the true faith, and practice of sincere holiness, notwithstanding all the sufferings that may attend a good conscience. Although every ordinary reader should not rashly undertake, to determine, who *Antichrist* is, described in this book; yet every one may certainly be informed, from several passages therein, of those marks and characters of him, which it most nearly concerns us to take notice of; *viz.* pride and ambition, and an affectation of worldly pomp and grandeur; a cruel and persecuting temper, which seeks to reduce others rather by force and compulsion, than by reason and argument; a love of ease and softness, and a careless and luxurious life: and that, whoever are guilty of these things, they are so far departed from the true spirit of christianity. He, who takes warning from the plain and frequent admonitions of this book to avoid these sins, shall be sufficiently profited thereby; and shall be entitled to the blessing, which is pronounced upon those, who keep the sayings of it.

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| <p>The signification of the seven candlesticks, c. 1. v. 12.</p> <p>The coming of <i>Christ</i>, c. 1. v. 7.</p> <p>Lukewarmness reprov'd, c. 3. v. 15.</p> <p>The twenty-four elders, c. 4. v. 4. & 10.</p> <p>The four beasts full of eyes, c. 4. v. 6.</p> <p>The book sealed with seven seals, c. 5. v. 1.</p> <p>What that book contained, c. 6. v. 1.</p> <p>The godly sealed on their forehead, c. 7. v. 1.</p> <p>The plagues, which followed the sounding of the trumpets by the seven angels, c. 8. v. 6. c. 9 & 10.</p> <p>The two witnesses prophesy, c. 11. v. 3.</p> <p>A woman clothed with the sun, c. 12. v. 1. & 6.</p> <p>The great red dragon, c. 12. v. 4. & c. 13. v. 4.</p> <p><i>Michael</i> fighteth with the devil, c. 12. v. 7.</p> <p>A beast with seven heads and ten horns, c. 13. v. 1.</p> <p>Another beast riseth out of the earth, c. 13. v. 11.</p> <p>The lamb on mount <i>Sion</i>, c. 14. v. 1.</p> <p>The fall of <i>Babylon</i>, c. 14. v. 8. c. 18. v. 1.</p> <p>The harvest of the world, c. 14. v. 15.</p> <p>The vintage and wine-press of God's wrath, c. 14. v. 20.</p> | <p>The seven angels, and seven last plagues, c. 15. v. 1.</p> <p>The song of them, that overcome the beast, c. 15. v. 3.</p> <p>The seven vials, full of the wrath of God, c. 15. v. 7.</p> <p>How <i>Christ</i> cometh to judgment, c. 16. v. 15.</p> <p>A woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, c. 17. v. 1.</p> <p>The interpretation of the seven heads, c. 17. v. 9.</p> <p>Of the ten horns, c. 17. v. 12.</p> <p>The victory of the lamb, c. 17. v. 14.</p> <p>The punishment of the whore, c. 17. v. 16.</p> <p>The marriage of the lamb, c. 19. v. 7.</p> <p><i>Satan</i>, bound for a thousand years, c. 20. v. 1.</p> <p>The first resurrection, c. 20. v. 5.</p> <p><i>Satan</i> let loose again, c. 20. v. 7.</p> <p><i>Gog</i> and <i>Magog</i>, c. 20. v. 8.</p> <p>The devil, cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, c. 20. v. 10.</p> <p>The last and general resurrection, c. 20. v. 12.</p> <p>A new heaven and earth, c. 21. v. 1.</p> <p>The heavenly <i>Jerusalem</i> described, c. 21. v. 10.</p> <p>The river of life, c. 22. v. 1.</p> <p>The tree of life, c. 22. v. 2.</p> <p>Nothing may be added to, or taken from, the word of God, c. 22, v. 18.</p> |
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Having thus set down some of the most instructive parts of holy writ ; before I conclude, I shall add a word or two by way of caution to those, who read the scriptures.

Let no one imagine, that *the Scripture is merely a book of Moralities* ; or that he does enough, when, by his own strength he endeavours to live up to the same. This, too much the *mistake* of many (otherwise sincere) christians, has greatly contributed to the lessening of the great end ; and is a *dangerous* method of reading those sacred books, which teach us, that *the way to ETERNAL LIFE* is through *FAITH* in CHRIST. A reader who turns the scripture into a book of *Moralities* ; or who ventures his salvation on any book, which treateth *only of moral duties* ; is not likely, to gain a true insight into the *fall of man*, and his *recovery* by *Jesus Christ* : for, as he hath but a partial knowledge of the various diseases of man's soul, it cannot be expected, he should bear any great regard to JESUS CHRIST, the restorer of nature. Such a man is apt to think, a little good *education* and *conversation* will fashion him into a *very good man* ; and quite take off, what may seem rude and unmannerly in him : the *whole* of his *Duty* is too much adapted, to the taste of the world : and, as he squares his actions by a set of shining moralities, and refrains from the visible pollutions of the world ; so he will be apt, to raise his own esteem on the vileness of those, who openly wallow in the mire of corruption. To remedy this disorderly way of reading, a man ought well to consider the principal end, for which the scripture was indited. The Scripture was written, not so much to make us EXTERNALLY good and sober ; as to make us BELIEVE, that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God* ; and that believing we might have life, through his Name : * The Scripture is (as St. Paul expresseth it) to make us wise unto salvation, through FAITH, which is in *Jesus Christ* ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.† This FAITH in *Christ* is attended with many marvellous changes in the mind : it is the first and original principle, from which abundance of heavenly operations proceed : it removeth the soul, out of the accursed stock of nature ; and transplants her into *Jesus Christ*, as a branch into the true



true vine. By *faith* a man is made a *new creature*; and (this enduing him with a willing, free, and obedient spirit) his works become acceptable to God; as they proceed no longer from *nature*, but from *grace*, the leading principle of a *Christian's* life and actions. In a word; The *Death* and *resurrection* of *Christ* are the great springs, whence all *Christian morals* constantly flow: since therefore *Jesus Christ* is the end and scope of the divine scriptures, and our only Saviour; all our reading ought to be resolved only *into him*, and into those effects which proceed from a just application of his *death* and *merits*.

THE CONTENTS.

TABLES of *Scripture Measures*: I. Of Length; II. Of Capacity. III. Of Scripture-Weights. IV. Of Scripture-Money.—Of Scripture-Time. V. Of the Seven Ages of the World. VI. The Jewish Months, compared with ours. VII. The Days of the Week; the Hours of the Day; the Watches.

I. Measures of Length.

	Cubits	Feet	Inch.	d. pts.
A Cubit — — —	—	1	9	.888
A Span — — a $\frac{1}{2}$ Cubit	—	0	10	.944
A Hand's breadth — a 6th —	—	0	3	.648
A Finger's breadth — a 24th —	—	0	0	.912
A Fathom — — —	4	7	3	.552
Ezekiel's Reed — — —	6	10	11	.328
The measuring Line — — —	80	145	11	.040

	Cubits	Miles	Paces	Feet d. pts.
A Sabbath-day's Journey	2000	0	729	3
The Eastern Mile — —	4000	1	403	1
A Furlong, or Stadium —	400	0	145	4 .6
A Day's Journey — —	96000	33	172	4

Note, 5 Feet make 1 Pace, and 1056 Paces make 1 Mile.

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II. Measures

II. Measures of Capacity.

<i>Liquid Measure.</i>	<i>Parts of an Homer</i>	<i>Gall.</i>	<i>Pints</i>	<i>Sol. In. d. pts.</i>
The Homer, or Cor —	—	75	5	7 .6
The Bath — — —	—10tb	7	4	15 .2
The Hin — — —	—60tb	1	2	2 .5
The Log — — —	—720tb	0	0	24 .3
The Firkin, or Metretres	—	0	7	4 .9

Note, 29 Solid Inches are nearly equal to a Pint.

<i>Dry Measure.</i>	<i>Parts of an Homer</i>	<i>Bush.</i>	<i>Pecks</i>	<i>Pints</i>	<i>d. pts.</i>
The Homer — — —	—	8	0	1	.6
The Lethech — — —	—half	4	0	0	.8
The Ephah — — —	—10tb	0	3	3	.4
The Seah — — —	—30tb	0	1	1	.1
The Omar — — —	—100tb	0	0	5	.1
The Cab — — —	—180tb	0	0	2	.9

III. Scripture-Weights.

	<i>Shekels.</i>	<i>Lib.</i>	<i>Oz.</i>	<i>Dwts.</i>	<i>Gra.</i>	<i>d. pts.</i>
A Shekel — — —	—	0	0	9	2	.6
The Maneh — — —	60	2	3	9	10	.3
A Talent — — —	3000	113	10	1	10	.3

IV. Scripture-Money.

	<i>Shekels.</i>	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>d. pts.</i>
A Shekel, of Silver — — —	—	0	2	3	.3
The Bekah — — — — —	half	0	1	1	.7
The Zura — — — — —	4tb	0	0	6	.8
The Gerah — — — — —	20tb	0	0	1	.4
The Maneh, or Mina — — —	50	5	13	10	
A Talent — — — — —	3000	34	10	4	.3
A Shekel of Gold — — — —	—	1	16	5	.1
A Talent of Gold — — — —	—	54	64	5	.6
A Golden Daric or Drachm —	—	1	1	10	.3

A Piece

		s.	f.	d.	pts.
A Piece of Silver (or the <i>Drachm</i>)		0	7	3	
The Tribute Money (or <i>Didrachm</i>)	2 <i>Drach.</i>	1	3	2	
A Piece of Silver (or the <i>Stater</i>)	4	2	7	0	
A Pound (or the <i>Mina</i>)	100	64	7	0	
A Penny (or the <i>Denarius</i>)		0	7	3	
A Farthing (or the <i>Assarium</i>)	20th <i>Den</i>	0	0	1	.5
A Farthing (or the <i>Quadrans</i>)	40th	0	0	0	.8
A Mite	80th	0	0	0	.4

Note, The Silver is here valued, at 5s. per Ounce; and the Gold, at 4l. per Ounce.

V. The Seven Ages of the World.

According to the usual Computation, the Account of Time from the Creation of the World, is divided into SEVEN Ages or Periods, viz.

The FIRST Age of the World, from the Creation to the Flood, includes the Space of 1656 Years.

The SECOND Age of the World, from the Flood to the Call of Abraham, includes 426 Years.

The THIRD Age of the World, from the Call of Abraham to the Israelites Departure out of Egypt, includes 430 Years.

The FOURTH Age of the World, from the Israelites Departure out of Egypt, to the Building of Solomon's Temple, includes 480 Years.

The FIFTH Age of the World, from the Building of the Temple to the Israelites being carried Captives into Babylon, includes 400 Years.

The SIXTH Age of the World, from the carrying the Israelites to Babylon, to the Birth of Christ, includes 508 Years.

The SEVENTH Age of the World, from the Birth of Christ, does already include 1774 Years.

VI. The Jewish Months, compared with ours.

1 Nisan, or Abib	Takes in Part of	{ March April,	7 Tifri, or Ethanin	Takes in Part of	{ September October,
2 Jair, Ijar, or Zif		{ April May,	8 Marchef- uan, or Bul		{ October November,
3 Sivan —		{ May June,	9 Chisleu		{ November December,
4 Thamuz		{ June July,	10 Tebeth		{ December January,
5 Ab —		{ July August,	11 Shebat, or Chebeth		{ January February,
6 Elul —		{ August September,	12 Adar		{ February March.

13 Ve-adar, intercalary. *

* *Note*, This month is *intercalated*, only, when the Beginning of *Nisan* would otherwise be *carried backwards* to the *End of February*.

Nisan began on the *Vernal Equinox*.
Tifri, on the *Autumnal Equinox*.

VII. The Days of the Week, Hours of the Day, and Watches.

1 st Day of the Week, Sunday.	The Hours of the Day.
2 ^d Day — — Monday.	The Day, reckoning from Sun-rise, and the Night, reckoning from Sun-set, were each divided into 12 equal Parts, call'd The 1 st , 2 ^d , 3 ^d , 4 th , &c. Hours.
3 ^d Day — — Tuesday.	
4 th Day — Wednesday.	
5 th Day — — Thursday.	
6 th Day — — Friday	
7 th or Sabbath — Saturday.	

The

Tables of Scripture Times.

581

The Morning.

From 6, to 7, 8, 9, 10, 11,
12.

The Afternoon.

From 12, to 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
6.

The Watches.

The 1st Watch was, from
Sun-set to the 3d Hour of
the Night.

The 2d, or *Middle Watch*,
from the 3d Hour to the
6th.

The 3d Watch, or *Cock-*
crowing, from the 6th
Hour to the 9th.

The 4th, or *Morning Watch*,
from the 9th Hour to *Sun-*
rise.



The T A B L E.

A. A Braham's offering Isaac <i>Page</i> 261 Accident 78 Actions, to be well considered 359 & seq. Admonition due to a wife 238 to a friend 241, 312 to a servant 251 how to be given 312 Adoration of God 168 Advice to such as have been sick 524 Advantages, worldly 6, 300, 364 Adulteration of goods, sinful 218 Adultery 268, 379 Advocate 108 Affairs, how to be settled 431 Affections of a husband 233 Affirmations of God 25 Afflictions rendered tolerable 42, 77 Ages (7) of the world 579 Agony, <i>see</i> Christ's sufferings. Almighty God 76 Almsgiving 316 as it respects God 317 our neighbour 319 ourselves 319 motives thereto 317 how to be distributed 320, &c. &c. in what proportion 325 does not impoverish 325 its reward 326 Ambition, what, and how curbed 364 Amendment of life 153 Angels 90, 106 's message 90 's salutation of Mary 91 Anger 310 Annihilation 132 Annunciation, <i>see</i> Angel's message.	Anxiety condemned 40 how cured 362 Apparel, how to be chosen 231 its lawful use 405 its ends <i>ib.</i> &c. its excess sinful <i>ib.</i> Appetites 415 Apostles Creed 67 their veracity, &c. 89, 104 Articles of the christian faith 67 Artificers, <i>see</i> Idleness. Ascension of Christ, <i>see</i> Jesus. Assistance due to a friend 241 Atheism, its folly and miseries 131, 146 Atheists, the case of 136 Attention, necessary in prayer 179 Attributes of God 23, 75, 77 B. B Ackbiters condemned by God 286 Bad company 243, 339 money 278 securities 271 Baptism, its benefits 64 why necessary to salvation 64 its vows 65 of unbaptized persons 64 their obligation 68 Bargaining, <i>see</i> Traffick. Beauty 352 Behaviour at church 47 at meals 174 Belief in one God and three persons 70, &c. one God Almighty 76 the Father 75 Son 74 Holy Ghost 74, 118 Belief, <i>see</i> Faith. Benefactors 303 Birth of Christ, <i>see</i> Christ. Blasphemy 160 Blemishes, natural 306 Bless-
---	--

T A B L E.

Blessedness, <i>see</i> Happiness.		Charity to the souls, bodies, and	
Boasting	352	goods of men commanded	306
Bodily worship	182	its good effects	306, 311,
Body of man	1, 5		322
our greatest kindness to it	5	to our enemies	308, 335
is mortal	1, 5, 306	is a pleasant duty	310
has no certain happiness in		suppresses all malice, &c.	310
this world	6	in our actions	311
its corrupt state	7	is to comfort him	311
<i>see</i> Resurrection.		relieve and admonish	312
Boldness	345, 346	in sickness and imprison-	
Bonds not discharging, sinful	272	ment	314
Bonds-men insolvent	271	under persecution for reli-	
Book, the intention of this	418	gion	314
Bounty to the poor	316	in respect of goods	316
Brawling	299	credit	328
Breach of trust, <i>see</i> Trust, and	275	its great rules	328
Breakings fraudulent	272	how interrupted	325
Brethren, the duty of	224	how to be procured	326
who so accounted	225	Chastity	378
natural, how to be loved	225	in what it consisteth	378
spiritual, how to be loved	226	helps to it	381
<i>see</i> Friendship.		Chearfulness recommended	403
Burial of Christ, <i>see</i> Jesus.		Cheating	273
Christian	103	Children, when capable of sinning	213
Business, worldly	158	Children's duty, <i>see</i> Parents, duty to.	
Busy-bodies	331	Christ, of faith in him	83
Buying and selling	276, 393	was a prophet, a priest, and	
C.		king	84
C Alumny	289	how this faith should influ-	
Cards	402	ence our lives	84
Care of the soul, the necessity		why called our Lord	85
thereof	1	objections against his being	
motives thereto	8	God and man answered	85, 92
Will not be in vain	13	must be believed	89
is in man's power	14	is foretold by the angel	90
of the body	5	his conception	92
Cares	365	birth	92
Catechising, its usefulness	60	lineage, mother, place	
a duty on parents, &c.	60	of birth	93
Cautions about recreations	402	published by angels	93
in religious matters	348	worshipped by shepherds	94
Censoriousness	286	advantages of his birth	95
how cast out	307 <i>see</i> Reports.	his sufferings and crucifix-	
Challenging	256	ion	96, 157
Chance, what it is	78	was tormented in his hu-	
Charity or beneficence	155, 303	man soul	97
the badge of a christian	305	the cause and benefit of his	
in the affections	305	sufferings	98, 157
		Christ	

T A B L E.

Christ, the use and benefit of this faith	98	Commandments of God	12
his death	99	how to be kept	67
how he draws us to himself	100	what they contain	193
his precepts	100	Communion holy, <i>see</i> Sacrament of the Lord's Supper	
his example	101	Communion of Saints	123. <i>See</i>
his grace	102	Church Catholick.	
our duty to him	102	Company how to be chosen	243
his burial	103	its importance	243
what to be learned from it	103	bad, to be avoided	243
his resurrection	103	Compassion, <i>see</i> Charity.	
its veracity proved	104	Complaints against God, unreason- able	37, 39, 41, 42
necessary for mankind	106	Conceit, <i>see</i> Self-conceit.	
why he appeared only to his disciples	106	Conception of the Virgin Mary	92
his ascension into heaven	107	Condemned prisoners	267
why in the sight of his disciples only	107	Conditions of prayer	178
his mediatorial office in heaven	108, 182	Confession, its duty and parts	152, 169
its benefit to mankind	109	Conscience, its sting	280
will come to judge all mankind	110	its light and sensibility	137
and angels	112	Consideration	358, 360, 361
in what manner he will judge mankind	112	its influence	359
Christian duties possible	69	danger of omitting it	361
Christianity, no imposture	87, 89	about marriage	239
not affected by the bad lives of some chris- tians	141	Constancy in friendship	242
Christianity, <i>see</i> Religion, Faith, Perfection.		Contempt of the world	432
Church, how to be revered	46	clergy	204
behaviour therein	47	Contention, dangerous	331
Catholick, of whom com- posed	121	Contentment in our station	44, 362
is universal, holy, and cannot fail	122	its good effects	364
is a state of salvation	123	helps to it	367
Civility	299	no real satisfaction without it	228, 368
Civil magistrate, <i>see</i> Magistrate.		Contrition, what	153
Clergy, <i>see</i> Ministers.		Conversation, rules for good	243
Cocking children	220	Correction, when necessary	216
Comforts of religion	146	imprudent, forbidden	216
Coming of Christ to judgment	110	Corrections of God	43
		Covenant, first, its nature	10
		second, its conditions	11
		sealed in the Lord's Sup- per	157
		Covetousness, what, and how cu- red	365
		contrary to our duty	366
		Counterfeits	272
		Courage, <i>see</i> Duelling.	
		Courtesy	299
		Creation of the world	76
		Credit	

T A B L E.

Credit or reputation, its value	283	Debts prosecuted for	315
to injure it, sinful	284	by security must be paid	272
demands reparation	294	by promise must be paid	273
See Charity.		Deceit in trust, what	275
Creditor	271, 305, 322	in traffick and bargaining	276
when unmerciful	315	its too frequent practice	276
Credulity	349	Decrees, <i>see</i> Melancholy.	
Creed, the	67	Defacing	260
Criminals murdering themselves		Defamation, <i>see</i> Detraction.	
	267	Defrauding creditors	271
Cruelty, its sin	261	the publick	273
whence it ariseth	261	Degrees, <i>see</i> Ranks.	
Crucifixion, <i>see</i> Christ.		of marriage	530
Curiosity, vain, condemned	39	Deists and Deism	ii
Cursing	160, 165	Delaying repentance, dangerous	446
no temptation to it	165	Denial, <i>see</i> Self-denial.	
admits of no excuse	166	Deprecation	170
must be avoided	166	of sin, and of punishment	170
what leads thereto	299	Deriding	306
Customs, paying	195	Despair of God's mercy	28
D.		when the effect of melan- choly, or of our sins	28
D AY, <i>see</i> Lord's Day, Feasts, Fasts.		its remedy	29
Days of the Week	580	Detraction, <i>see</i> Censoriousness, E- vil speaking, false reports, ly- ing, slander	
Days, our, how to be numbered	424	means to prevent it	284
Dealing, <i>see</i> Traffick, Deceit, and Fair-dealing.		Devil, who	65
Death, what it is	418	his works, what	66
is common and near to all,		his power over us	377
though uncertain	419	Devotions, <i>see</i> Prayer, and Duty of Man.	
its time not decreed by God	419	Dice	402
why dreadful to human na- ture	441	Diligence or perseverance in virtue	371
its fear, how removed	442	<i>see</i> Industry.	
advantageous to men	419, 442	Directions for reading the scrip- ture, <i>see</i> Help.	
how made terrible	443	Disappointments	411
why young men ought to pre- pare for it	421	Discontent	362, 367
why old men should be con- tent to die	422	Discretion in thinking	340
preparation for it	425, 435, 440	Diseases or distempers	410
Death of Christ, <i>see</i> Christ.		Dishonesty, dangerous	245
the righteous, what	434	Disinheriting a child	221, 431
Death-bed, <i>see</i> Repentance.		Dismembering	260
Debauchery	378, 379	Disproportion of offences	309
Debtor insolvent	315, 322	Disputes, religious	142
Debts contracted fraudulently	271	Disquiet of conscience	279
put off when due, is sinful	271	Dissimulation	308
		B b 5	Distrac-

T A B L E.

Distractions in prayer	180	Duty towards God	17, 22, &c.
Diversions	401	to our neighbour	193, 337
Divine Revelation, <i>see</i> Revelation.		to ourselves	328, &c.
Divinity of the Son of God	83, 92	Duties relative	193, to 252 and 302
Holy Ghost	74, 79, 118	their necessity	252
Doctrine, <i>see</i> Divine Revelation.		E.	
Dress, when blameable	231, 406.	Eating, its ends	388
<i>See</i> Apparel, Fashions.		directions for its use	387
Drinking, its ends considered	388	danger of high eating	387
its false ends described and		exhortations against it	387
their danger	390, 392	Education of children	212, &c.
of spirituous liquors	393	how to be managed	216
degrees of this sin	395	Employment	218
its guilt and mischief	395	Encouragement due to servants	251
the necessity and difficulty		Enemies how to be loved	308, 335
of forsaking it	396	motives thereto	309
how avoided	396, 397	Engrossing, sinful	278
admits of no excuse	399	Enthusiasm in ourselves	33
Drunkenness, its danger	390. <i>See</i>	in others	375
Temperance.		Envy, a sin	300
Duelling is murder	256	its folly	301
Duty (Old) of Man's defects	ii	how remedied and cast out	307
(New) its intention	418	Epistles of the Apostles	563
of Man, its parts	22	Equivocation	297
to our neighbour	193, 252	Estate how to be disposed of	220
King	193, 197	Eternity of hell torments	135
civil magistrates	196	Eves-droppers, <i>see</i> Tale-bearers.	
ministers or pastors	198	Evidence must not conceal the	
parents	206	truth	289
children	212	Evil gotten goods	279
husbands	227	and good, <i>see</i> Good and Evil.	
wives	229	will	299
brethren	224	Evil-speaking, its sin	284
relations	323	when lawful	287
friends	242	to be discouraged	288
masters	244, 248	Exaltation of Christ	108
servants	246	Examination before communion	
to ranks and qualities	301	its use	150
to those in want, <i>see</i> Poor.		heads of self-examination	501
of Princes	196	Example	216
civil magistrates	196	Excellency of God	31
pastors or ministers	198	christianity	72, 86, 141
parents	212	Excess, <i>see</i> Drinking, Intemperance.	
wives	227	Excuse, <i>see</i> Drinking.	
husbands	235	Extortion condemned	277
friends	240	F	
servants	244	Faculties of the soul	2, 7, 254
masters	248	Faith in God	24, 155
among brethren worldly	224	his affirmations	25
spiritual	22 6	his commands	25
		Faith	

T A B L E.

Faith in God's promises	25	Frauds in breaking	272. See Deceit.
threatnings	25	Free-thinking	131, 136, 145
Jesus Christ, <i>see</i> Belief,		Friendship, its benefit to mankind	
Rule, &c.	83		240
Christian, to be believed	67,	its duties	240
	73	old, how valuable	242
its benefits	73	its qualifications	242
necessary in prayer	178	Frugality in a wife	231
Fair dealing, the advantages of	279	Futurity, all means to prognosticate events sinful	41
Faithfulness amongst friends	240	G	
of servants	244	Gaming, its sin and danger	402
Fall of Adam and Eve	10	Ghost, <i>see</i> Holy Ghost.	
False reports	284	Gifts of nature	373
witness	289	of grace	375
Family prayer, its duty	173	not to be neglected	377
Fashions, their folly and danger	406	Glebe, <i>see</i> page 50 in the note.	
Fasting, a duty	190	Glory, <i>see</i> Vain-glory.	
how kept	191	in heaven	134
when acceptable to God	191	Gluttony	389
when sinful	191	God, duty to	23
cannot satisfy for sin	191	is to believe his existence	
Fasts of the church, <i>see</i> Lent 55, 190			23
Fate, what it is	78	in his affirmations	25
Father, first Person in the Trinity	73	commands	25
God the	74, &c.	promises	25
the benefit of this belief	76	threatnings	25
Faults of others, concerning the	288	is to rely on him	25
<i>see</i> Evil-speaking.		is to love him	29
Fear of God why necessary	34	his excellency	31
of men more than God, its		kindness	31. See Faith,
folly and danger	35	Hope, Fear, Love,	
of death how removed	442	Trust, Obedience, Sub-	
Feasts of the church, how to be		mission, Honour, Name,	
kept	54	Word, Belief, Duty.	
Felicity, <i>see</i> Happiness.		is to fear him	34
Festivals, <i>see</i> Feasts.		is to trust in him	37
Fidelity in a married state	231	is to obey him	42
in a servant	244, 273	his corrections how to be	
in every person	273	borne	42
Fighting	256	is to honour him	45
First covenant	10	in his house	46
Flattery to be avoided	296	in his ministers	49
Flesh, its lusts to be renounced	67	how to honour him	46
Forgiveness, <i>see</i> Sins, Reconcilia-		in his sabbath.	52
tion, and Enemies	308, 309	in his word	58
Fornication	379, 380	in his sacraments	63
against the law of nature	381	in his name	160
Fortitude, <i>see</i> Patience.		God is One in substance	73
Fortune, <i>see</i> Fate and Goods.		is Three in person	74. See
Fortune-telling	41	Trinity.	

God.

T A B L E.

God is Almighty	77	Holy Spirit, <i>see</i> Holy Ghost.	
made man	92	scripture, rule of our faith	58
his justice vindicated	135	how to be read	59
must be worshipped	168	Honesty	245, &c. &c.
the only object of our prayers	182	of servants	244
his presence a check to our		Honour due to God	45
thoughts	341	in his house, ministers,	
Going to law	210, 334	word, sacraments, posses-	
Golden rule, the	328	sions, holy-days, and	
Good and evil	280	name 46. <i>See</i> God.	
men	4, 132	Honours	352
name	284, &c.	Hope in God, a duty	26
Goods of our neighbour must not		on what grounded	27
be damaged, hurt, spoiled, &c.	268	its use	27
stolen, not to be dealt in	278, 279	Hours of the day	580
of nature	352	Humiliation	152
of fortune and grace	352	Humility or submission to God,	
Goodness of God, <i>see</i> Mercy.		what, 42, 81, 153. <i>See</i> Sub-	
Government	193, 206	mission.	
of the thoughts	337	necessary in prayer	179
of the passions	355	to our neighbour, what	341
of the tongue, <i>see</i>		its necessity	343
Tongue.		destroys pride	350
Governors, <i>see</i> Magistrates.		Husband, adulterous how to be	
Grace at meals	174	treated	234
Graces	155	is to love his wife	235
Gratitude to benefactors	302	to bear with her infirmities	236
Grief	410	to be faithful to her bed	236
Guide, <i>see</i> Spiritual.		to maintain her	237
H		to instruct and pray for her	238
Happiness temporal	6	bad, who to be so accounted	238
eternal	9		
Heaven	132, 134	Hypocrisy, <i>see</i> Truth, Equivocati-	
Hatred	300	on, Evidence, Flattery, Lying.	
Health	386, 394	= 1	
Hearing sermons, <i>see</i> Sermons.		I	
Heathens, <i>see</i> Unbaptized persons.		Identity of the body	128
Height of christian perfection	444	Idleness, its manifest hurt and	
Hell	133, 138	danger 218, 219. <i>See</i> Time.	
Help for reading the holy scrip-		danger of to servants, &c.	
tures	531	brings poverty, &c.	374
High living, dangerous	387	cause of drunkenness	374
Holy Ghost (God the)	71, 118	root of all evil	374, 401
his peculiar office	118	Idolatry	182
how he worketh in us	119	Jealousy	233
necessity of this belief	120	Jesus, <i>see</i> Christ and Faith.	
our duty to him	120	Jesting	298
En against him	121	Jews	105
		Jewish	

T A B L E.

Jewish weights and measures	577	Invocation, <i>see</i> Prayer.	182
months, &c.	579, 580	Justice of God vindicated	14, &c.
Illumination of the spirit	119	to our neighbour	254
Image-worship, <i>see</i> Idolatry.		negative	255
Immateriality of the soul	2, 25	positive	295
Immenfity of God	70, &c.		
Immortality of the soul	2	K	
Impatience, its bad effects	412	Killing, <i>see</i> Murder.	
how overcome	412	Kindness of God	31
Employment	39	King, duty to the	194
Imprisonment	314	must be assisted, prayed for,	
Incarnation of Christ	92	and obeyed	195
Inconsideration, its danger	360	duty of a	196
Incredulity	348	his supremacy, what	205
Industry, its blessings	375	Knowledge of God	20, 73
Inferiors, duty of	194, 244, 301	L	
Infidelity	131, &c.	Labourers, <i>see</i> Idleness.	
Infirmities	226	Language, ill	284
Ingratitude to God, what	309	reproachful	286
man	302	Last judgment	114
Inheritance	220, &c.	Law, when to go to with a parent	
Injuries, <i>see</i> Murder, Fraud, Theft			210
Persecution.		suits vexatious, sinful	272, 334
Injustice, what	268, &c.	of prosecuting an offender	315
is the ruin of the soul	281	a debtor	315
malicious	269	Laws, human	330
covetous	269	Laying wagers	403
Inoffensiveness, <i>see</i> Censoriousness.		Learning	201
Detraction, Evil-speaking, Scof-		Lent-fast, what, when instituted,	
ing, Whispering.		and how to be observed	56
Insolvent bondsmen	271	Lessening the merit of others, sin-	
Inspiration	70	ful	301
Instinct of animals	2	Lewdness, how to be avoided	383
Instruction of children, a duty	215	Liberality, <i>see</i> Bounty.	324
Integrity, <i>see</i> Honesty.		Liberty, <i>see</i> Thoughts.	
Intemperance, <i>see</i> Excess.		Life holy, exhortation thereto	13,
in drinking	388		427
Intention <i>see</i> Thought.		natural, when taking it away	
of this book	418	is murder	255, 262
Intercession to God	171	when it may be taken away	
of Christ	108, 182	without sin	262
Jokes	298	remarks on its shortness	435
Judges, <i>see</i> Magistrates.		longest, whose so accounted	435
Judgment, rash	286, 307	long its disadvantages	436
at the last day	115	how to be improved	437
in what manner	116	mis-spent, its danger and folly	
is reasonable	117		439
committed to Christ	111	a good, what	441
concerning what	112	long, why desired	443
Invisibility of God	24	<i>see</i> Eating, Drinking, Time and	
		Death.	

Light

T A B L E.

Light of nature	20	Man, fear of	35
Liquors, spirituous, <i>see</i> Drinking.		Marriage, the first consideration	
Lives, wicked, <i>see</i> disputes or wicked		in it	239
Living peaceably, what	332	when unlawful	239
high, dangerous	387	how far the parents should	
Looks	299	interpose	209
Lord, <i>see</i> Christ.		Married state, <i>see</i> Subordination.	
Lord's day, <i>see</i> Sabbath-day.		Martyrs	105
supper	147 to 159	Mary's (the <i>Virgin</i>) salutation	91
why ordained	149	resignation	91
its obligation	149	Masters, duty to	244
its benefit	147	servants owe them obedience	
our duty <i>before, at, and</i>		and faithfulness	244
<i>after</i> it 150, &c. &c.		submission and diligence	247
Loss of friends	411, &c.	duty of	248
Losses in business	411	owe their servants justice	248
Love of God, in what it consisteth	29	admonition	249
motives thereto	30	good example	250
its effects	31	use and command them with	
tokens of its sincerity	32	moderation	250
how distinguished from self-love	33	to encourage them	251
of his ministers, <i>see</i> Ministers.		Matrimony, to whom forbidden	530
of parents, <i>see</i> Parents.		Meals, grace at	174
of brethren, <i>see</i> Brethren.		Measure, <i>see</i> Scripture.	
in a married state 228, 233, 235		Mediator, betwixt God and man,	
what so esteemed by a wife 235		who	108
of our neighbour what 303. <i>See</i>		Meditation	156
Charity.		Meekness in a wife, necessary	230
Loving our enemies	308, 335	is due to all men	299
Lust, its sin, danger, and mischief		a remedy against pride	351
to soul and body	379	Christian, what	354
God's judgments against it	381	its advantages	355
excludes from heaven	381	how to be obtained	356
how to be avoided	383	Melancholy, <i>see</i> Despair, Cheer-	
Luxury	387	fulness.	
Lyes in trade sinful	278	persons that murder them-	
jocose	208	selves	267
Lying always sinful	297	prevents the good influence	
its folly	298	of the Spirit	405
M			
Magistrates, duty to the	196	Mercy of God 11, 24, 31, 75, 95	
duty of	197	Mercy, <i>see</i> Charity.	
Marring, a great crime	260	Merit of works exploded	42
Maintenance of the clergy, a duty	50	Message of the Angel to Mary	90
Malice	307	Middle state	439
its bad effects	310	Mind of Christ afflicted	97
Man, how composed	1	Ministers of God, how to be reve-	
his first estate and fall	10	renced	49, 198, 203
his covenant with God	10	duty to them	198
mere moral, who 17, &c.		how to be qualified	200
duty of	24	must not be condemned on ac-	
		count of their bad lives	202
		Ministers	

T A B L E.

Ministers of God, how to behave		Necessity of repentance	185
to bad ones	203	the priesthood	200
why so often contemned	204	relative duties	251
how to be punished	206	humility	341
when necessary to advise and		Necessities of our nature, but few	368
assist us	156, 434	Neighbour, duty to our 193, <i>see</i>	page 253
Miracles	87	New Testament	58, 550
Misfortunes	410	Niggardliness	409
Mocking God, the sin of	160	Numbering our days	424
Modesty, <i>see</i> Chastity.		Nursing children	212
Modesty in dress	231	O	
Money, bad, not to be paid	278		
the Jewish	579	OATHS Assertory and Pro-	
Months, the Jewish	580	missary	161
Moral duties, too much valued	ii	when unlawful	161
Morality true	18, 337	lawful,	161
Morality of the thoughts	338	their obligation	162
Morrow, how to be taken thought		vain, lead to perjury	165
for	39, 40	Obedience to God	42, 154
Mortality of the body	i, 5, 255	the King	195
Mortgages	271	ministers	199
Mortification, <i>see</i> Fasting, Merit,		parents	208, &c.
Self-denial.		a husband	229
Motions to good	337, &c.	a master or mistress	244, &c.
to evil	340	Object of our prayers	182
Murder, how many ways commit-		Objections, <i>see</i> Resurrection, Prayer	
ted	255	Death, Christianity, Ministers.	
in thought and word	256, &c.	Oblations to the clergy	50
the wickedness of this sin	257	Offences against God and men	310
punishment that attends it	258	Offender, how to prosecute	315
how strangely it is often dis-		Offices of Christ	83
covered	259	Office of the Holy Ghost	118
the incitements to it	259	Old Testament not contrary to	
self, is sinful	263	the New	58, &c.
ought to be abhorred	263	Omnipotence of God	35
is infamous	263	Omnipresence of God	341
causes thereof	265	Operation of the Holy Spirit	119
its danger	265	Oppression in dealing or traffic	278
how to prevent it	266	Oppression, what, and God's ven-	
the case of melancholy		geance against it	280
persons	267	Original sin	10
of condemned prisoners	267	Ortation	353
Murmuring and how cured	362	P	
Mysteries in the scripture	22, 70,		
N	80, 84, 85	Parents, duty to	206
NAME of God to be honoured	160	must be respected	206
Nature, what it is	78	loved	207
Nature, <i>see</i> Goods of Nature.		obeyed	208, &c.
Natural religion	20	helped	211, &c.
Necessity, what it is	78	when disobeyed	209
of a spiritual guide	156, 434	duty of	212
		Parents	

T A B L E.

Parents are to nurse, baptise, and educate their children	212	Persons, Three, <i>see</i> Trinity.	
to teach them their duty	215	Petition to God in prayer	169
to give them good example	216, &c.	for our souls pardon of sins, and for our bodies, 169, &c.	
how to correct them	216	Piety, motives thereto	7, 13, 15, 30
to teach them respect to each parent	217	its advantages	436
to provide for their subsistence	218	must be pursued	438, 440
in some honest calling	218	Pity, <i>see</i> Charity.	
of leaving them estates	220	Plainness in dealing commended	276
in what proportion	221	Pleasantness of religion	103, 413
when they may disinherit a child	221	Pleasures, <i>see</i> Recreations.	
when they may not	223	Pomps and vanities	66
must pray for them	224	Poor, <i>see</i> Almsgiving, Charity, Resignation.	
Pains	410	Positiveness, <i>see</i> Humility.	
Parables of Christ	552	Poverty	44, 364
Partaking of other men's sins	241	Power, <i>see</i> Soul, Trust, Devil.	
Particular judgment	114	of God	35, 75, 77
Passion	354, &c.	Prayer, its office and power	150
Passionate people	357	its duty and parts	155 to 172
Pastors, <i>see</i> Ministers and Priesthood.		publick, in church, its duty and benefit	172
Patience, Christian, what	410	in a family	173
why a duty, and necessary	410	at meals	174
it must be persevering	412	private, its duty	174
in sickness	432	ought to be frequent	175
Pawns, counterfeit	271	its necessity	175
Payments, <i>see</i> Debts		the times of	176
put off	272	its advantages	176
Peaceable, how to be	332	ease	177
Peace-makers qualifications	324	pleasantness	178
Peace-making shortens quarrels	331	conditions	178, &c.
Peace of mind, <i>see</i> Contentment, Meekness, Humility.		only object is God	182
Peevishness	347	power and efficacy	183
Pentecost, feast of	118	objections answered	184
Peremptoriness, <i>see</i> Humility		Preaching why not so instructive as reading	vi
Meekness, Consideration.		its use	61. <i>See</i> Sermons.
Perfection, Christian	444,	Praise and thanksgiving to God	172
its comforts	444, &c.	Preparation for the Lord's Supper, <i>see</i> Sacrament.	
Perfections of the scriptures, <i>see</i> Scriptures and 72.		for death	425
of God	23	habitual	428
Perjury described	163	its advantages	430
its guilt and danger	163	hindered	430
its punishment	164	Presumption against God, what	27
Persecution	314	its cure	27
Perseverance, <i>see</i> diligence, patience.		Pride conquer'd by charity	307
Persons unbaptized	64	what it is	346
		its danger and folly	347, 352
		opposes God.	347, &c.
		Pride	

T A B L E.

Pride draws to other sins	350	Rank and Quality, duty to 299, &c.	
provokes divine justice	350	Rash judging. <i>See</i> Censoriousness.	
betrays to punishment	350	Rash judgment	286, 307
how to be conquered and avoided	351	Reading the scripture, <i>see</i> Help.	
Priesthood is honourable	200	Reason, <i>see</i> Trinity.	
why ordained	200	Reasons for writing this New Duty of Man	2
appointed by God	201	Reconciliation, a duty before communion	154
qualifications for it	201	Recovery from sickness	528
its usefulness	202	Recreations, when and what allowable	402
not to be despised	202	cautions to be observed in them	402
<i>see</i> Ministers.		their undue ends	403
Prince, <i>see</i> King.		Redemption of man	97, &c.
Prisoners condemned, <i>see</i> Criminals		Refreshment, <i>see</i> Recreations.	
Promises of God, <i>see</i> Faith, Trust.		Regeneration, how obtained	119
man to man	295		154, 176, &c.
Prophecies of and by Christ 88, &c.		Relations, duty to	323
Prophet, <i>see</i> Christ.		Relative duties, necessary	252
Prosecutions for offences	315	Religion, Christian, its object	18
debt	316	natural	20
Prosperity, <i>see</i> Affliction.		revealed	20
Protections to wrong creditors, sinful	272	its reasonableness, certainty, and comforts 21, &c.	146
Providence of God 77. <i>See</i> Trust in God.		why necessary, and when published 21, 22, <i>see also</i>	339
is not partial	364	why opposed	21
Prudence	322	must be believed 22. <i>See</i> Faith, Revelation.	
Public, robbing or defrauding the	273	its truth and excellency	86
Punishments, <i>see</i> Corrections.		perfection	141
in the next world	116	not affected by the wicked lives of its professors	141
God's justice vindicated in regard to eternal	135, 138	arose not from fear, education, or state policy	143, &c.
how this ought to influence us	140	Religious melancholy, <i>see</i> thoughts	267
Purgatory, no such place	190, 439	Remission of sins	125, 137, 185
Purity, necessary in prayer	181	Remorse of conscience	280
of body and mind, <i>see</i> Chastity.		Repentance, what	185
Purposes, good, to be encouraged	339	whence it ariseth, and when it is effectual	186
of amendment	153	its qualifications	187
Q		must not be put off	187, 426, 446
		when most necessary	188
Qualifications for the priesthood	200	on a death-bed, dangerous	183, 426
Lord's supper	148		
prayer	178	Reports	
of a servant	247		
Quality, <i>see</i> Rank and Quality	244		
Quarrels, how abated	331		
R			
Railing	286		
Rancour, how suppressed	310		

T A B L E.

Reports, false, their crime	285	Reviling	286
See Admonition.		Rewards and punishments	117,
of the dead	285	&c. what they teach us	117
uncharitable	286	Riches, their uncertainty	6, 364
their bad consequence	286	Ridicule	287, &c.
and 292. See Whispering.		Rule of faith, see Scripture.	
Reproaching	289, &c.	for reading the scripture, see	
Reproof by a parent, when neces-		Help.	
sary	216	S	
to a bad neighbour	312	Sabbath-day, how to be kept	52
how to be given	312	why instituted	52
in case of intemperance	313	of what advantage	54
Reputation, see Credit.		changed into the Lord's	
Resignation to God's will 432. See		day	53
Anxieties, Murmuring, Sub-		Sacrament, what	63
mission to God.		of baptism, its benefit	64
Resentment	355	of the Lord's supper, what,	
Resolution	158	and its benefits	147
Resolutions of obedience	154	our duty to receive it	147,
Respect due to men of quality,		&c.	
and to the rich	301	why ordained	149
due to extraordinary merit	300	preparation before receiv-	
to the poor	302	ing it	150
to all men	299	the danger of unworthy	
not paid by the proud	299	receiving it	155
see King, Magistrate, Minis-		when a spiritual guide is	
ters, Children, Servants,		necessary	156
Humility to our neighbour.		devotions and directions at	
Restitution, why necessary	281	the time of receiving	
how to be made	282	156, 157	
of credit necessary	153	duties after receiving	158
Resurrection of the same body	127	means to encrease our re-	
its certainty	127	gard for it	159
why opposed	127	the benefits of receiving it	
objections answered	128	often	159
its benefit to the good, and		Sacrifice of Christ	92, &c.
misery to the wicked		Sacrilege, what	51
132, &c.		God's punishment of it	52
its influence on us	133	Saints, communion of	123
of Christ, see Christ.		Salvation, where found	123
Revelation (divine) its reasonable-		Salutation of the Virgin Mary	91
ness, certainty, and necessity 20,		Sanctification	118
&c.		Satisfaction for sin, necessary to	
how proved	70	obtain pardon of God	154, &c.
its inward evidences	70	to men, see Restitution.	
its outward evidences	71	or contentment, see	
its difficulties	72	Contentment.	
its excellency 68, &c.	86	of Christ	11, &c.
Revenge	308	Satire discommended	286
how suppressed	310	Saviour, see Christ.	
its bad effects	310	Scorning at religion, a sin	160
		Scorning	

T A B L E.

Scorning at our neighbour, sinful	293	Sin, what	124, 137
Scriptures (the holy) a rule of	58	makes death terrible	443
faith	58	how forgiven	125
their contents	58	its forgiveness comfortable to	
help to reading them	531	us	125
how to be read	59	when effectual	126
weights and measures	577, 578	cannot be excused	159, 137
money	578	its danger	159, 190
difficulties	22, 72	must be avoided	372
<i>see</i> Religion and Revelation.		other men's, how we par-	
Seasonable reproof	312	take of them	241, 254
Second covenant	11, 157	drawing others to, an injury	254
Securities, bad, are sinful	271	after baptism	185
Self-love, an impediment to chris-		against the Holy Ghost, what	121
tian charity	335	Sincerity	295, &c.
Self-conceit, what, and how curb-		Sins, forgiveness of	124
ed	345	Sinners, <i>see</i> Wicked.	
its bad effects	346	a caution about repentance	426
Self-defence	262	Slanderers	283
Self-denial, what, and its duty	415	public	289
is of great advantage	416	who partake of their	
Self-examination	150, 503, &c.	sins	426
Self-murder	263	reasons against this vice	297
Self-seeking	308	Sleep (time of) how to be measur-	
Selling, <i>see</i> Buying.		ed	401
Selves, <i>see</i> Duty to our		its abuse sinful and dangerous	401
Sermons, how to be heard	61	Sloth, <i>see</i> Idleness.	
the danger of some hearers	62	Sobriety 326. <i>See</i> Drinking 392	
the end of hearing them	62	Son (God the) second person in	
<i>see</i> behaviour at church.		the Trinity	74, &c.
Servants, their duty to masters	244	Sorrow, <i>see</i> Pains, Grief.	
must be obedient and ho-		Soul, its worth	2
nest	244, 245	immortality	3
the danger of their disho-		state how determined	7
nesty to themselves	245	considered, both in its	
must not answer again	246	natural and spiritu-	
must be diligent	247	al state	253, 254
Service, eye, condemned	244	oul, <i>see</i> Care of the soul.	
Servitude, of God's appointment	247	Speaking evil, <i>see</i> Evil-speaking.	
Seven ages of the world	579	S truth	295
Shame	34, 381	Spirit, meek, in a wife, its advan-	
Sickness, <i>see</i> Death, Will, Sub-		tag es	230, 356
mission, Patience.		of God	79, 118
Sick persons	313	Spiritual guide	156, 434
Sickness, recovery from	528	brethren	226
Simplicity in dealing	276	Spirituos liquors, <i>see</i> Drinking.	
in conversation	296. <i>See</i>	Sports	
Truth.			

T A B L E.

Sports	403	Ten Commandments	67, 193
State of the soul	7	Testimony of the Apostles	89, 105
middle, what	439	Thanksgiving to God	172
Stealing, what, and its crime	265	Theft, what	270, 274
Strength of body	273	Thought, taking for your life, how	
Strife	331	to be understood	40
Stripes, their sinfulness	260	Thoughts, justice in our	295
Style of the Scriptures	72, 531	how governed	336
Subjection, <i>see</i> Subordination.		our power over them	
in a married state	227		337
Subjects, their duty	194	in what their liberty and	
Submission to God's will	42	morality consists	338
in sickness	433	their first motions to be	
its benefits	42	attended to	340
its duty	43	Threatnings of God	25
how perfected; its fruits	44, 45	Time,	399, 424, 435
Subordination in a married state	227	how to be spent	400, 438,
its good effects	227		439
Sufferings of Christ, <i>see</i> Christ.		Tongue, the government of it, <i>see</i>	
men	42, 433	Cursing, Swearing, Lying, Sland-	
Sunday, <i>see</i> Sabbath day.		derers, Backbiting, Reports,	
Supererogation (works of) sinful	192	Detraction.	
Supper of the Lord, <i>see</i> Lord's sup-		their bad consequences	291
per.		Torments of hell, <i>see</i> Hell.	
Supremacy, <i>see</i> King.		Trade, <i>see</i> Traffick.	
Superiors	194, 250, 301	Tradesmen's duty	374
Suretyship	272	Traffick, deceit in, its sinfulness	276
Swearing, what, and when lawful	161	rules to be observed in it	276
when unlawful	161	unjust, seldom successful	279
vain or common, its guilt		fair, its advantages	279
and danger	161. See	Tribute, <i>see</i> Taxes.	
Cursing, Oaths, Per-		Trinity of persons in the God-	
jury.		head, why to be believed	80
Sympathy in afflictions	305	its difficulties	80
T		how to be inquired into	81
Tale-bearers	331	takes not away the use of	
Taunting	286, 293	reason	82
Taxes must be paid	195	Troubles, <i>see</i> Afflictions, Trust in	
Temperance in eating	385	God, <i>see</i> Providence.	
in drinking	388	Truth, <i>see</i> Evidence, Lying and	
in sleep	401	Equivocation.	
in recreations	402	must always be spoken	295
in apparel	405	Trust, a breach of, sinful	273
Temptation, how far able to op-		what it includes	275
pose virtue	377	deceit in	275
how guarded against	378	in God, what	37
		why necessary	38
		in what manner	38, &c.
		Turning	

T A B L E.

Turning to God not to be delayed	446	Wicked (the) are self-condemned	136
Tythes, their institution and duty		are left without excuse	137
50, <i>see</i> page 51 in the note.		ought to suffer eternally	135, 138
V		christians lives do not affect	
Vagrants	323	christianity	141
Vain-conceit	347	Wife, duty of a	227
Vain glory, what, its sin, danger,		must obey, and why	227,
and folly	353	the danger of contention	228
helps against it	354	the rules of her obedience	230,
Vanities, <i>see</i> Poms.		&c.	
Veracity of God	37, &c.	must be faithful, frugal, and	
the Apostles	90, &c.	modest in dress	231
Vexatious law-suits	272, 334	must love her husband	232
Vice, <i>see</i> Sin, Lying, Debauch ry.		how to secure her husband's	
Violence, <i>see</i> Murder, Oppression.		affections	232
Virgin Mary	91	how to behave to an adulter-	
Virtue, the chief consideration in		ous husband	233
marriage	239	must be meek	230, 234
must be pursued	437, <i>see</i>	why she ought to be loved	
Piety.		235, &c.	
Visiting the sick	313	must be maintained	237
Unbaptised persons	64	instructed and prayed	
Unchangeableness of God, <i>see</i> Pro-		for	238
misses of God.		seduced, the injustice thereof	268
Uncharitableness	286, 307	Will, last, how to be made in re-	
Uncleanness, <i>see</i> Lust, Chastity.		gard to children	220
Union of the soul and body	1	when, and how to be made	431
two natures of Christ	92	Will-worship	182
Unity of God	73	Will of God	37, 44
Unmercifulness	315	Wisdom of God, submission to	37
Unlawful marriages	239		43
Unworthiness of works	42, 192	human	354
ministers lives	202	of being religious	37
Uprightness, <i>see</i> Virtue.		Wit	287, 352
Vows in baptism, what	64	Witchcraft	41
their obligation	68. <i>See</i> Sa-	Witness, false, the crime	289
crament.		Woman, why not so capable of ru-	
inconsiderate, rash, &c.	167	ling a family as the man is	229
W		Word of God, <i>see</i> God, Scripture,	
Wagering	403	Revelation.	
Wages	244, 245	Words, <i>see</i> Meekness.	
Wants, <i>see</i> Trust in God.		Works, our best are unworthy	42
Wants of nature	368	of the devil, what	65
Watches of the night	581	of supererogation	192
Watchfulness in prayer	180	Working of the Holy Ghost	119
against sin	372	World to renounce, what	66
Wealth	352	its creation	76
Weights and measures unjust	278	contempt of it	432
Whispering a bad report, sinful	290	Worldly	

T A B L E.

Worldly business, when to be avoided 158 affairs how to be settled 431 Worship due to God's name 168 bodily 182 Worth of the soul, <i>see</i> Soul. Wounding, the sin of 260	Y YEAR, the Jewish 580 Z ZEAL in prayer 180 in the faith 416 good, bad, christian 416 when abused, and how to be practised 416
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A TABLE of Prayers and Thanksgivings, &c.

Directions and Prayers for the Morning.

E jaculations <i>when we first awake</i>	449
A preparatory Prayer for God's Grace and Assistance	449
A Morning Prayer for every Day	450
The concluding Prayer	453
The Intercession	453
A Prayer for the right use of the Scriptures	455
The Thanksgiving	454
Ejaculations <i>while the Scriptures are reading</i>	456
A Morning Prayer to be used by a young Person	462 & seq.
A Morning Prayer to be used by a Servant	464

Directions and Prayers for the Evening.

A preparatory Prayer	456
A Prayer for Sincerity in acknowledging our Sins	456
A short Form of Examination of our Conscience	457
A Confession of our Sins to God	457
An Evening Prayer for every Day	459
A concluding Prayer	462
Ejaculations <i>at going to Bed</i>	462
An Evening Prayer to be used by a young Person	463
An Evening Prayer to be used by a Servant	463
A Prayer for Faith in God	466
Hope in God	466
the Love of God and his Laws	466
Sincerity towards God	467
Sincerity towards Men	467
Humility towards God	468
the Fear of God	468
Trust in God	469
A Prayer	

T A B L E.

A Prayer for our Benefactors	469
Acts of Contrition	469
A Prayer for a meek and quiet Spirit	471
Chastity	471
Temperance	471
Patience	472
Diligence	472
the Love of our Neighbour	473
Charity	473
Piety and Regeneration	474
a right Use of our Time	474
the Care of the Soul	474
the Government of the Tongue	475
A Prayer to be used on Fasting Days, and the Forty Days of Lent	475
for true Mortification	475
for Repentance	476
for Assistance of Grace	476
against inordinate Anger	477
under Lesſes	477
in Prosperity	477
for ſuch as are poor and low in the world	478
under Injuries and Abuses	479
for Perſecutors	480
againſt Covetouſneſs	480
for temporal Bleſſings and Contentedneſs	481
to be uſed on our Birth-day	481
by one tempted to preſumption	482
by one troubled in mind, or tempted to Deſpair	483
in Time of Temptation	483
by one going to Law	484
by one intending to Marry	485
by a Woman with Child	486
before making a will	486
for the ROYAL FAMILY, and for all Rulers and Magiſtrates	487
for the Clergy	488
for the Religious Societies	489

Prayers ſuited to the Articles of the Creed, &c.

A Prayer to One God and Three Perſons	490
A Thankſgiving for the Birth of Chriſt	490
A Prayer for the Benefits of Chriſt's Death	491
A Thankſgiving for the Reſurrection of Chriſt	491
A Thankſgiving for the Aſcenſion of Chriſt	491
A Prayer that we may be prepared for the laſt Judgment	491
A Thankſgiving for the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt	492
A Prayer for the Preſervation of the Church	492
Forgivenenſs of ſins	492
Faith in the Reſurrection of the Dead	493
Life Everlaſting	493
A Para-	

T A B L E.

A Paraphrase or Explanation of the <i>Lord's Prayer</i>	494
Ejaculations for <i>Pardon of our Sins</i>	499
for <i>Advancement in a Christian Life</i>	499
for <i>God's Mercy</i>	500
in <i>Time of Trouble</i>	500
Acts of <i>Adoration and Thanksgiving</i>	500
Heads of <i>Self-Examination</i> before receiving the <i>Sacrament</i>	501
A Prayer for <i>sincere Repentance</i>	516

Prayers for the Holy Communion.

A Prayer for a <i>worthy Receiving</i> of the <i>Lord's Supper</i>	517
when we offer our <i>Alms</i>	517
after the <i>Consecration</i> of the <i>Bread and Wine</i>	517
before receiving the <i>Bread</i>	518
when the Priest comes to give the <i>Bread</i>	518
when the Priest comes to give the <i>Cup</i>	518
after receiving the <i>Bread and Wine</i>	518
when we are <i>retired</i> from the <i>Lord's Table</i>	519

Prayers for the Sick.

A Prayer in time of <i>Sickness</i>	520
on <i>sending</i> for the <i>Physician</i>	521
on <i>taking Physic</i>	521
on <i>want of Sleep</i>	521
when labouring under <i>bedily Pain</i>	522
for a <i>sick Child</i>	522
against the <i>Fear of Death</i>	522
for an <i>Easy and happy Death</i>	523
for <i>Assistance at the Hour of Death</i>	523
An <i>Admonition and Thanksgiving</i> after <i>Recovery from Sickness</i>	524, &c.

F I N I S.



